Vol. 43. No 2

The Maryland Yellowthroat

May 2023

Photo by Jean Kirkwood

Among many dazzling photos taken by Yellowthroat readers in recent months was this one of an incredible Sword-billed Hummingbird from the Ecuadorian Andes. Check out Chapter Chatter for more.

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The Maryland Yellowthroat

Publication of the Maryland Ornithological Society

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Editor's Note

With so much always going on in the Maryland environmental arena, how can we keep track of it all? And, how can we get involved where we can have the most impact? To help answer these questions, we are able to introduce in this issue a new regular feature, "Conservation Corner", thanks to MOS Conservation Committee Chair, Dr. Robin Todd. Robin's goal will be to keep us up to date with the latest developments of environmental issues that are of concern to MOS. We are grateful that he is sharing his knowledge of environmental issues and his scientific expertise with us. Stay tuned for updates.

In the May, 2022, Yellowthroat, at the suggestion of MOS member James Speicher, we began "The Members' Perch," a forum where MOS members and Yellowthroat readers can express their opinions relating to issues of interest to MOS, e.g. birds and birding, conservation, environmental ethics, environmental advocacy, and civic engagement. Now, in this issue's Members' Perch, we are happy to include Colin Rees' eloquent thoughts about widening the quest of finding and identifying birds to include consideration of their ecological roles and conservation needs. We encourage you, as well, to share your thoughts in "The Members' Perch." The accumulated experiences, insights, and areas of expertise of the MOS members and Yellowthroat readers are bound to be illuminating.

Elsewhere in this issue, you will find the latest installment of our MOS Sanctuary Spotlight series, thanks again to the never-ending energy and commitment of Marcia Watson and Jeremy Castle. This time, with Jan Reese, they tell us about Talbot County's Mill Creek Sanctuary. This profile is joined by another, a description of the American Chestnut Land Trust in Calvert County, a sanctuary of over 3,400 acres and with 24 miles of trails. Many thanks to author Judy Ferris and to American Chestnut Land Trust Executive Director Gregory Bowen for alerting us to this natural area gem.

George Ratcliffe and Wayne Bell give us an update of the latest YMOS activities, and Anna Urciolo tells us the fortunate MOS scholarship winners who will be attending workshops at National Audubon's Hog Island in Maine this summer. Jean Wheeler's Chapter Chatter describes some fabulous trips MOS members have taken recently, illustrated, as always, with some beautiful photos. Robin Todd adds an expanded description of his several-month sojourn in Cayman Brac this winter, an experience he has, apparently, enjoyed on more than one occasion. Several months wintering on Cayman Brac - we know some people who could get used to that.

Tree Swallow Photo by Jane Aughenbaugh

President's Corner

Happy Spring to all MOS members!

I hope everyone is out enjoying the migrants! In our yard, the first Chipping Sparrows are the harbingers of spring, and I always enjoy hearing them as I walk out the door. Unusual and early sightings abound around the state as birders are eagerly taking advantage of the warm weather. For the first time in several years, I will be traveling right before the convention to Ohio, on a Frederick Bird Club chapter trip. Beloved Magee Marsh, with warblers at eye level 20 feet away, is beckoning.

Speaking of the convention! For months now, our focus has been "All Things Convention": venue, meals, lodging, our treasured field trips, pin contest, photo contest, vendors, posters, social hours, insurance, keynote speaker, seminar speakers, sponsors. Speaking of sponsors! I am dedicating the President's Corner to thanking all of the people and businesses that stepped up to support our convention, either with monetary donations, or with items to raffle or auction. Convention costs have skyrocketed over the years - our sponsors help defray the cost of the convention, To learn about our sponsors, read on!

Daniel Stouffer, watercolor artist, was the largest sponsor this year for the convention.https://danstouffer.com/ Dan's beautiful works have won 60 national and regional prestigious awards in prominent competitions such as the Rocky Mountain National and Arts for the Parks and Watercolor U.S.A. He is listed in "Who's Who in American Art" and "Who's Who in the West". How did we lure him into donating so many paintings for our Silent Auction, you might ask? He is my first cousin. I was talking to him about how difficult it is to find convention sponsors (OK, I was whining); and he said "Do you want me to send you some paintings?" He has frequently donated his works to raise money for parks and nature-related organizations, so this was typical for him! A fascinating fact about Dan? He is colorblind! To his eyes, his gorgeous landscapes look like nuances of hues; such as grays and golds.

Hats off to **Fran Toler** https://tolerfinancialgroup.com/ who is our convention's largest monetary donor,both this year and last year! Fran has been a vendor at both 2022 and 2023 conventions! Are you interested in financial planning? Fran's company, Toler Financial Group, specializes in aligning investments with the values of her clients. Issues such as global warming, gender equality, environmental protection, human rights, worker protection, criminal reform and sensible gun laws are important to Fran, her company, and her clients. Fran's company manages sustainable portfolios using mutual funds from companies that are pushing for corporations to be better global citizens.

You probably have been in a **Wild Birds Unlimited** somewhere; there are about 300 around the country! Their feeders are renowned for adjustable heights and accessories; personally, I love their mugs and cards! You may remember WBU gave us donations for our last year's convention at Solomon's. For this year's convention, Wild Birds Unlimited was back behind us! The Frederick WBU, owned and run by Paul and Jean Gates, gave us very nice donations for our raffle, plus a very nice discount on other items that we purchased. Check them out! https://order.wbu.com/frederick

Ed Lewandowski donated a truly lovely painting of a puffin for our convention this year! Ed's interest in art was rekindled during the covid lockdown and a well-known associated by-product - trouble sleeping! Hence the name of his website and works, "Nsomniak Art". https://nsomniakart.com/ He returned full steam to painting, and learning about it. He is a member of the Mispillion Art League, and he founded an annual outdoor painting event in Laurel, Delaware. His work is represented by the Nanticoke River Arts Council Gallery in Seaford, Delaware.

Are you interested in the history of the 1918 Migratory Bird Treaty Act? **William McLean Greeley** is the author of a biography of Connecticut U.S. Senator and Governor George P. McLean, who was the sponsor of the act. This book was released in March, published by the Rochester Institute of Technology Press, and is endorsed and praised by David Sibley. Greeley is related to McLean; and in fact one reviewer calls it "a love song to a distant relative."

https://www.rit.edu/press/connecticut-yankee-goes-washington

Thank you to the following businesses for donating raffle items to us. **The Mill of Bel Air** is a very nice garden store that donated to our convention both this year and last year. They have lawn and garden supplies, farm supplies, pet supplies, work apparel, livestock feed, the works! We received a hat for our raffle from **Big Pockets** which has great outdoor gear. https://www.bigpockets.com/ If you want to step away from the big box stores and shop at a small family run hardware store - try **Kendall Hardware in Clarksville.** https://www.kendallhardware.net/

I encourage you to support these businesses! When you are looking for the items they sell, please think of them. By supporting MOS, they are supporting what you value and what you do; shopping at their businesses is a great way to support them back!

Bonnie Borsa

Volunteer Opportunity with Maryland Ornithological Society Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

The Maryland Ornithological Society (MOS) Committee on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion is looking for new members as we embark on a 3-year strategic plan to help increase the diversity of MOS membership, build partnerships with other organizations, and expand our educational and outreach programs.

Cape May Warbler by Gabriel Foley

We welcome anyone interested in this work. This is an exciting opportunity to really help shape the future of MOS. The only requirement is a willingness to learn and contribute.

For more information contact: Ross Geredien at goodmigrations@yahoo.com or 610-850-5035

The Members' Perch

Through the Looking Glass

Bird watching is really all about the quest for balance—between the curious animal at the near end of the binoculars and the wild animal at the far end; between the classifiable and the ineffably mysterious; between our killing, conquering urges and our impulse toward conservation.

Jonathan Rosen.

Along with birders, butterfly watchers celebrate the fall of the year with its promise of strays and vagrants. Both parties frequently share the same habitats, but it's surprising how little curiosity they have about the other's interest. On one occasion, my wife and I had waded into a flowering bush on the edge of a forest to admire some butterflies and other insects, when out popped three birders with a pointed question: "Anything of interest? We've just seen a Tennessee Warbler" "Yes," we replied, "we're looking at migrant red admirals and question marks." A squall of pain crossed their faces and they quickly turned heel in search of more compelling rewards – for them!

Such monocular vision compartmentalizes the natural world and denies the viewer the joy opening up nature's full tapestry: new worlds, new insights and "endless forms most beautiful and most wonderful,"as Darwin put it. Since childhood, I have collected bird and other faunal identification guides and now have some 150, covering many countries and hotspots. I still collect them, especially when visiting another part of the world or finding one that's been updated. Over the years improved artwork and, to a lesser degree, photography have rendered the images clean and healthy as if untouched by nature. But here's the rub: with their tendency to project a narrow view of the natural world, individual species become separated from their habitat and ultimately concern for their protection. Such sanitization and disjunction brings costs to a full understanding of birdlife and the threats it faces, indeed the larger natural world.

Roger Tory Peterson stated, "Make a birder, and you make a conservationist" and some of his kaleidoscopic illustrations on flycatchers promoted a move toward that end. His statement sustained a belief that connections between field guides and conservation were beyond question: knowing more about plants and animals makes for a wider knowledge of the natural world. True some recent field guides have begun to build this relationship – such as *The Crossley ID Guides* and *The Sibley Guide to Birds* along with guides for specific localities – yet most continue to ignore crucial aspects of the species' ecological health, with the result that causal relationships that the birdwatcher might forge with natural habitat remain elusive.

Books, it seems, do best at showing how birds look; they fare less well in representing their sound and habitat or niche. Consequently, electronic means are now being increasingly developed, such that *birdwatching* is but one way of studying birds. The next step must be to inculcate an appreciation of the birds' context (habitat) thereby encouraging birdwatching in many dimensions and deepening interaction with the natural environment.

John Griggs' *All the Birds of North America* points the way. He arranges species by their feeding adaptations and field-recognizable characteristics, along with images of birds living in highly modified landscapes. It is a major departure from traditional biological illustration and taxonomy and grounds avifauna in a more 'realistic' setting. Such a guide invites the user to comprehend the ecological niches in which birds live and to ponder the need for their protection. In a profound sense it is mainstreaming the findings of ornithology and scientific inquiry, as was the case at the end of the 19th century when the authors of field guides regarded themselves as naturalists and argued for conservation.

South African ornithologists have taken Grigg's approach to another level by asking what habitat the bird is in and observing a bird's behavior. Illustrations are provided for each major summer and winter habitats along with descriptions of the behavior of the birds present.

In his *Guide to Bird Watching*, published in 1943, Joseph Hickey called on fellow bird watchers to re-tool their hobby in a world "full of prejudice and politics and loose thinking" (sound familiar?). He laid out certain principles "that should govern the thinking and conduct of every birdwatcher" and that have resonance in today's world:

1. More than ever before, the conservation movement now demands the mutual cooperation of many people interested in diverse things;

2.Many of the needs of conservation can be met by community action;

3.Last-minute laws and eleventh-hour sanctuaries are sorry efforts to correct long-continued land abuse and lack of long-range planning; and,

4. Misuse of wildlife is but a symptom of universal land abuse.

Hickey maintained that conservation is a product of "intelligence times persistence" and called on bird watchers to have plenty of both. We must hold that while it is worthwhile and enjoyable to observe and protect wildlife in its totality, we must not hide in bird blinds and leave nature to cure itself.

Happily, some bird watching societies and clubs, such as the MOS, have appointed conservation chairs and funded species and habitat conservation initiatives, sometimes using state wildlife action plans. Such plans often coalesce

around partnerships with conservation bodies as well as state and federal government funded projects. Citizen science contributes substantially to these endeavors, especially in the areas of monitoring and habitat restoration.

But are we not missing the next step? Many of the tools are available – conservation strategies, remote sensing and other modern technology, workshops and human resources. But we need to bring these together into a coherent whole so that a more systematic approach may be adopted. That is the challenge.

Colin Rees 14 March, 2023.

YMOS News

YMOS Birdathon, 2023

At 5 PM Sunday, March 19th, the YMOS birders identified their 142nd species, finding Great Cormorants off Kent Point. Beginning at 4 AM Saturday, the youth birders scoured an area from Ocean City to the Bay Bridge. Thanks to all who participated, especially the parents who drove throughout the weekend.

This total was a new high, and all 100 must-see species were found for the first time. Only Cedar Waxwings were missing by Saturday evening, and a flock appeared early Sunday morning. While some species were well into their migration north, the group was able to locate stragglers, several of which had been scouted earlier. It was a glorious weekend for all.

There were too many high points to choose the best moment:

·Hearing an extremely early Common Gallinule on Elliott Island Road early Saturday morning

·Arriving in Ocean City to find an Iceland Gull sitting in a parking lot with the Rock Pigeons

·Finally, finding a noisy King Rail in South Dorchester

·Observing Ospreys everywhere

·Finding a Pine Siskin before we saw the first Goldfinch

·Finding a staked-out Ruby-throated Hummingbird

·Getting an early Pectoral Sandpiper at Blackwater NWR

·Rejoicing that Snow Goose was not a must-see species as they had all packed up and left

·Having a Peregrine Falcon fly so close overhead on Egypt Road, the group could feel it fly by.

·Finding the four staked-out Trumpeter Swans in Talbot County on Sunday

·Missing Common Mergansers at Blackwater but finding them below Dover Bridge in Caroline County

This is our one and only fundraiser for the year, and while we don't know the final amount raised yet, the YMOS members extend heartfelt thanks to all who contributed and assisted. The money raised helps pay for supplies for our rapidly growing group and will fund the record six YMOS teams competing in the World Series of Birding in May. For those of you who missed out on all the fun, mark your calendars for this time next year for Birdathon 2024.

George Radcliffe and Wayne Bell

MOS Scholarship Update

The Audubon Hog Island Camp has celebrated more than eighty years of education, and MOS has supported scholarships to this camp for many years. Our recipients work with students in schools or nature centers across Maryland. I have briefly listed their current job positions, but there is so much more in their resumes and scholarship letters that they accomplish in those fields.

The camp is also celebrating 50 years of Project Puffin. To read more, check out this link:

https://projectpuffin.audubon.org/about/50th-anniversary

MOS will be awarding scholarships for the summer 2023 workshops to six recipients who applied this year to attend one of the camp workshops.

Three of the recipients will be attending the **Field Ornithology** workshop:

Matthew Felperin, Naturalist at Patuxent River Park (Baltimore Bird Club recommendation)

Rachel Harbert, Naturalist at Marshy Point Nature Center (Baltimore Bird Club recommendation)

Adam "Troy" Muffley, Park Ranger at Smallwood Park (Anne Arundel Bird Club recommendation)

Alina Martin was one of this year's recipients, but she had to withdraw due to current work out west.

Three recipients signed up for **Sharing Nature: an Educator's Week**

Jessica Furr, Naturalist and Park Ranger at Kinder Farm Park (Anne Arundel County) (MOS recommendation Montgomery Bird Club)

Jillian Kane, Naturalist at Eden Mill Nature Center (Harford Bird Club recommendation)

Colleen McCandless, Teacher at Rising Sun Neck Middle School (Cecil Bird Club recommendation)

All of the recipients will write a report about their experience at the camp and how they will incorporate the new information and tools for teaching into their current workplace. These reports will appear in a future issue of The Yellowthroat and also be sent to their home chapter. They will also present a short program at various MOS chapters in the coming year.

Congratulations to all of the Hog Island Campers and also to the MOS chapters and colleagues who recommended them.

Anna Urciolo

MOS Scholarship Committee Chair

Conservation Corner

The recently completed first session of the Maryland General Assembly (MGA) produced several wins for birds and conservation in general, all of which the Committee supported in some fashion. Here they are in summary.

1. Study PFAS Testing in Pesticides Bill

This awkwardly-named bill originally sought to require annual testing of all pesticide products which are registered for use in Maryland, to determine if they contained PFAS (commonly known as 'forever chemicals' owing to their persistence in the environment). Any pesticide products found to contain PFAS would not be allowed to be sold in Maryland. The chemical industry and pesticide users fought hard against this bill, in part because they alleged there are no reliable testing methods for PFAS. In fact there are reliable test methods. MOS teamed with SPOC group (Smart On Pesticides Coalition), who helped lead efforts to pass the bill. As a compromise, the bill was eventually amended down to one which requires the Maryland Depart of Agriculture, in conjunction with the MD Depts of Environment and Health, and US EPA to a study to clarify several questions about how to test for PFAS in pesticides and to report on this study to the Governor by November 1, of this year. This report will be the basis for a 2024 bill to restrict the use of test pesticides found to contain these troubling chemicals. So be ready for me to ask you to register your support for this bill!

2. Pollinator-Friendly Powerline Bill

The strips of land lying beneath powerlines could provide valuable habitat for birds, pollinators and other wildlife, but the utility companies are required to keep these areas mowed regularly so that all vegetation is less than 12 inches high. The Pollinator-Friendly Powerline bill will allow these companies to only mow once every other year, between November 1 and March 31 (October 1 and April 30 in Western Maryland. As an example, reduced mowing along the powerline corridor that runs across Sligo Park has resulted in the growth of a rich assemblage of wildflowers and shrubs, which attract pollinators and birds. With 50,000 acres of such corridors throughout the state, this bill has the potential for enhancing large areas for pollinators and birds.

3. Maryland Native Plants Program Bill

This bill will encourage the use of native plants in the state by setting up a Maryland Native Plants program through the Maryland Department of Agriculture and the University of Maryland Extension.There will be an online list of Maryland native plants, a Maryland grower/retailer certification program, a voluntary labeling program and a logo.There is funding a native plant specialist who will educate the public about these plants. The net result should be to make it easier for general public to obtain and successfully grow native plants. This in turn will provide more food sources for herbivorous insects and this food for birds.

4. Maryland the Beautiful Bill

Also known as the 30x30 bill since is aims to protect 30% of Maryland land area by 2030 (and 40% by 2040). With the establishment of the Local Land Trust Revolving Loan Program, funds will be made available for the rapid purchase of land and conservation easements by local land trusts.In 2025, $10,000,000 will be made available for such purchases. Recurring funds will also be available for training in land stewardship and monitoring.

5. Forest Retention Bill

Maryland lost more than 19,000 acres of forest from 2013 through 2018, so this bill is good news. It is intended to result in a net gain rather than no net loss.Notably, current regulations only require developers to replace areas of forest cut down on a 1 to 4 basis. Thus, if four acres of forest are cut down, the developer only has to plant one acre to mitigate the loss .Picture it: 4 acres of mature forest are cut down, only to have 1 acre elsewhere planted with saplings. The bill requires 1 for 1 replacement. It also gives local governments more flexibility in meeting their forest conservation goals.

6.Sustainable Building Bill

This bill is designed to minimize adverse impacts (literally) to birds. It will require all buildings and substantial renovations to existing buildings, which are more than 50% funded by the state, to include bird-friendly and energy conservation features.The former will include measures to minimize bird collisions and to reduce lighting during the spring and fall migration months. The bill also requires buildings to take energy conservation measures in accordance with LEED guidance. This bill was promoted tirelessly by Safe Skies, so congratulations are in order, notably to Carolyn Parsa and Mark Southerland.

Other matters included the following two items.

Horseshoe Crabs and Red Knots

We continue to interact with the Horseshoe Crab Recovery Coalition (HCRC) to restrict, if not stop, the harvest of these crabs. Horseshoe crabs are used as eel and whelk bait and for bleeding (in the latter case crabs' blood is used for testing for microbial contamination of medical devices). In March, Kurt Schwarz and I, together with Audubon Mid-Atlantic, met virtually with DNR wildlife and fisheries staff. Our objective was to learn about the crab fisheries and not to pursue any policy matters. DNR presented knot survey and crab harvest and survey. The DNR staff believe that the current harvesting of horseshoe crabs by Marylanders is sustainable. Interestingly, they suggested that the birds may now be departing from states further south, bypassing Maryland and Delaware, as they head north to their Arctic breeding grounds. DNR seemed committed to the current harvesting regime. Audubon Mid Atlantic will, however, now take the lead in following up with DNR to search for ways to reduce the Maryland crab harvest.

New plans for MD State Forests Includes More OHV trails

DNR's Forest Service's draft plan for Maryland's State Forests include expansion of trails for Off Highway Vehicle (OHV) use. These noisy vehicles disturb birds, wildlife and other users of these forests, including birders. We submitted comments on behalf of the committee arguing against expanding OHV trails. In addition, I sent out a MailChimp alert asking MOS members to individually contact the Forest Service directly. I was gratified to hear from several members that had done so.

Once again, I would like to thank Kurt for his invaluable support. That is all for now. Please send me any questions or comments on conservation matters.

Best regards,

Robin G. Todd PhD

Chair, MOS Conservation Committee

Robin.todd@mdbirds.org

SPOTLIGHT ON:

American Chestnut Land Trust

Calvert County, Maryland

By Judy Ferris

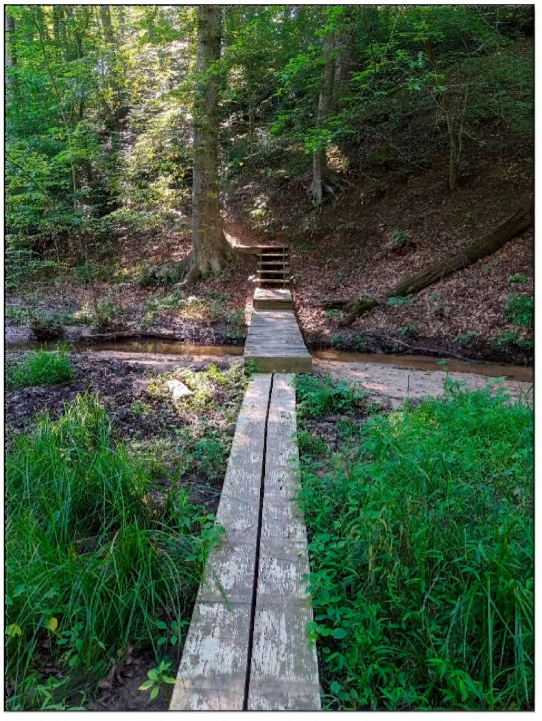
Size:3,450 acres with 24 miles of well-maintained trails.

Habitats: Wide variety of habitats. Meadows adjacent to extensive forest. Localized old growth forest. Most upland forest is mature mixed hardwood. Understory variable – hollies on slopes, vines and shrubs in forest openings, wildflowers, and shrubs in warm, sheltered bottomlands.

Hours: Year-round.Dawn to dusk.

Cost: Free, but donations are always welcome. *bit.ly/DonateACLT*

Tips: You can easily spend several days birding the hills and valleys of American Chestnut Land Trust. Be sure to check trail maps ahead of time to decide which type of trail and destinations suit you. Hiking boots may be helpful for climbing steep slopes and navigating low spots after a rain. The word 'bottomlands' may sound ominous from a hiker's point of view, but ACLT's industrious volunteers have built numerous boardwalks and bridges in the lowlands to help hikers stay high and dry.



Flint Trail - South Side Trailhead

Porta-potties at main North and South side parking areas only.

Hunting is permitted at ACLT. Check the ACLT web site for details regarding hunting season and dress accordingly.

https://www.acltweb.org/index.php/aclt-hunting-schedule/

Wheelchair access: American Chestnut Land Trust is not wheelchair accessible.There is one level trail that is accessible to motorized scooters (Griffin Meadow Trail). This trail runs along the forest edge and encircles meadows, Double Oak Farm, and a Food Forest.

Best Seasons: Spring and fall for migrants.Late spring through early summer for breeding birds. Winter for resident birds, winter migrants, and waterfowl.

Breeding Bird Atlas Blocks (4): Prince Frederick SW, Prince Frederick SE, Prince Frederick CW, Prince Frederick CE.

Spotlight: American Chestnut Land Trust

Continued from Page 8

– Relax and enjoy an aerial, Osprey-eye view of the heart of ACLT; Parker's Creek and the surrounding forest. *https://youtu.be/jV5m2dN0WhI*

For Maps and More Information:

American Chestnut Land Trust web site: *www.acltweb.org*

Printable trail map: bit.ly/TrailMapACLT

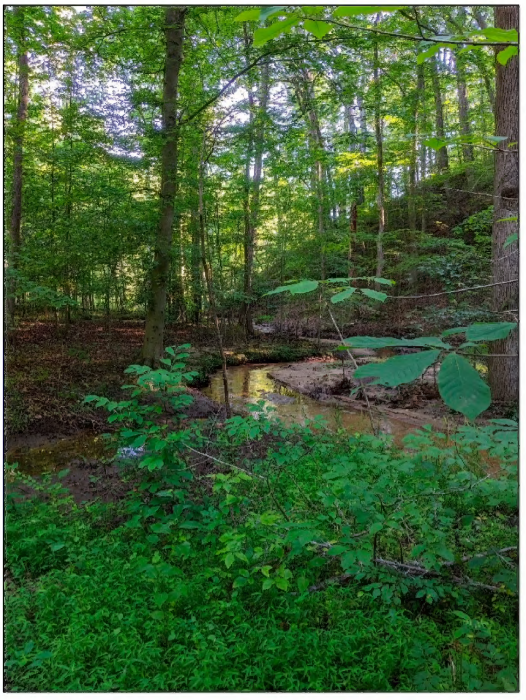
Printable Bird Checklist and ACLT bird database: *https://www.acltweb.org/index.php /the-land/watershed-ecology/birds-of-aclt/*

Imagine a spacious wildland sanctuary, situated roughly between the Patuxent River on the west and the Chesapeake Bay on the east. Tucked into central Calvert County, American Chestnut Trust (ACLT) is an expansive oasis for wildlife, birders, and hikers. Parker's Creek is the beating heart at the center of this preserve. Cradled amidst tranquil forests, the creek meanders, unspoiled, through beaver-engineered wetlands, creek-side bottomlands, and saltwater marshland as it flows from Prince Frederick to the Chesapeake Bay. A quick glance at a map reveals that American Chestnut Land Trust is no ordinary wildlife conservancy. *https://www.acltweb.org/wp-content/uploads/ 2022/10/2022-Master-Map.jpg*

The trust was founded in 1986. At that time, it encompassed 436 acres. Over the past 36 years significant additional properties have been added. As a result, watersheds at Parker's Creek and Governor's Run have been protected from development. Today, American Chestnut Land Trust owns and/or manages 3,450 acres and is still growing! The property is interlaced with an impressive 24 miles of trails. Maintained by dedicated volunteers, these trails provide access to a variety of habitats; from upland meadows and forests to creek-side bottomlands.

The best birding routes at American Chestnut Land Trust begin in an upland meadow or forest and descend gently to the bottomlands or a stream. Where meadows meet trees or shrubs, they ring with the songs of dueling birds that favor the fascinating intersection of grasses, shrubs, and trees.

After the bustling activity at the meadow's edge, entering the upland forest is like stepping into a cathedral. The air smells different, the sounds are different, and a sense of tranquility fills the air. ACLT's forests are mostly mixed hardwood, with a variety of understory of plants. Some areas of old growth forest remain, but most is mature hardwood.I n the deep woods, the forest floor is relatively open. Allow in the tiniest shaft of sunlight, however, and the ground may be dappled with wildflowers,obscured by shrubbery, or transformed by vines. Each scenario is attractive to different bird species. Forest openings can be a birders delight, especially in spring.



Most trails lead from upland meadow or forest and descend gently to the bottomland of a stream

As the forest slope descends toward a valley floor, the understory vegetation may change noticeably. Many of ACLT's steep slopes adjacent to creeks are populated by holly trees; yet another habitat for birds to exploit. Many songbirds prefer these sloping areas, including breeding species such as Worm-eating Warblers and Ovenbirds, as well as migratory Black-throated Blue Warblers and Veeries. In spring, you may be treated to the ringing song of a Louisiana Waterthrush echoing from the valley depths.

As you descend toward the bottomlands of the creek, a new symphony of bird sounds filters up through the trees; the high-pitched squeals, hoarse squawks, and strident 'skil-o-rees' of a busy marsh. Arriving at the lowlands along Parker's Creek, you once again sense that you have entered a new realm. It's a bit sunnier, warmer, and less windy here. In spring, your path may be lined with Jack-in-the-Pulpit, wildflowers, and the delicate curls of unfurled ferns. With its abundance of dead tree trunks, this is Woodpecker Heaven! All local woodpecker species can be found in the bottomlands of ACLT, including Hairy Woodpeckers and Red-headed Woodpeckers. Lowland trails that skirt Parker's Creek also offer opportunities to look and listen at the saltwater marsh edge for shy marsh dwellers. Scan the far shore and keep an eye to the sky for swallows, Bald Eagles, and hawks. Patient exploration along the creek may reward you with a unique sparrow, warbler, or Orchard Oriole which prefer this warm, waterside habitat.

Spotlight: American Chestnut Land Trust

Continued from Page 9

Step into a new realm on one of many trails that bring you close to Parker's Creek

A highlight of a walk along Parker's Creek is a visit to the 'raft'. For the adventurous birder, this raft is actually a ferry. You can use your own muscle power to haul yourself across Parker's Creek. A short pull brings you to the opposite shore and a whole new set of trails! Or, you can just park the raft in the middle of the creek to relax and admire passing birds.

The raft at American Chestnut Land Trust

American Chestnut Land Trust receives stellar marks from conservation organizations. Parker's Creek, the core of ACLT, has been noted by Maryland DNR as "the most pristine watershed on the western shore of Maryland". Most of ACLT merits the DNR's highest rating - Tier 1.This reflects ACLT's importance as high quality habitat that sustains not just local species, but migratory species as well. Its multi-faceted ecosystems will be critical in the future as habitats shift due to climate change.

In 2021, ACLT produced a Report Card that evaluates how well ACLT is doing on such topics as water quality, buffers, ecosystem services, etc. View the report card here: *bit.ly/ACLTReportCard*

Mapping by the Nature Conservancy highlights Calvert County as one of the most resilient landscapes in Maryland. A basic tenet of resiliency is a low level of human intervention. A high level of resiliency also requires a combination of topographically complex landscapes and connected landscapes, which allow for movement of species. American Chestnut Land Trust, with its extensive acreage and its interconnected hills and valleys, exemplifies all of these features extremely well. It is a resilient landscape that will provide critical wildlife habitat as we move into the future. Read more about ACLT's resiliency here: *bit.ly/ACLTNL-Resiliency*

The true beauty of American Chestnut Land Trust is that it goes beyond simply conserving and caring for the land. Its greater goal is to be an *advocate* for the land by educating and connecting with the community and with other like-minded organizations.This is where the magic happens. ACLT has reached out to partner with federal, state, and local organizations to develop plans for preserving wildlands. Working together with communities, these partners have formulated plans to protect critical habitats in Calvert County and beyond, not just for today, but for generations to come. American Chestnut Land Trust is also a key sponsor and member of the newly formed Southern Maryland Conservation Alliance. The Alliance is a network of partners who work to conserve and restore Southern Maryland's landscapes, waterways, and shorelines that are special to its people, fundamental to its economy, reflected in its culture, and vital to its native fish, wildlife, and plants.

American Chestnut Land Trust is powered from top to bottom by a dedicated and enthusiastic team which includes its board of directors, its staff, its supporters, and its volunteers. It counts dozens of Master Gardeners and Master Naturalists amongst its volunteers. It is a place where new ideas are nurtured, and where there is always an eye to the future.

WHY VISIT?

American Chestnut Land Trust is so large that it has multiple eBird locations and covers 4 different Breeding Bird Atlas blocks. Total birds listed for the entire area are 220 species. Nevertheless, the area is seriously under-birded. On any given day, or perhaps any given

Spotlight: American Chestnut Land Trust

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The five counties of the Southern Maryland Conservation Alliance

week, you may be the only birder present. Your biggest dilemma in birding ACLT will not be locating parking or trails; it will be deciding which trails to explore.

In addition to its high marks for conservation, American Chestnut Land Trust is also an Audubon Important Bird Area. IBA birds which breed at ACLT include Kentucky Warbler, Hooded Warbler, Worm-eating Warbler, Louisiana Waterthrush, Northern Parula, American Redstart, Summer Tanager, Wood Thrush, Red-headed Woodpecker, and Barred Owl.

In winter, migratory Ruby-crowned and Golden-crowned Kinglets, Brown Creepers, Hermit Thrushes, Yellow-Bellied Sapsuckers, Winter Wrens, Yellow-rumped Warblers, and White-throated Sparrows join typical resident birds in the forest. Marshlands around Parker's Creek attract wintering and resident waterfowl.

Spring migration begins at American Chestnut Land Trust as early as mid-March and peaks in the first week of May. Notable migratory songbirds that breed at ACLT include Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Acadian and Great Crested Flycatchers, Summer and Scarlet Tanagers, House and Marsh Wrens, Blue Grosbeak, Indigo Bunting, Orchard Oriole, and Wood thrush. Other songbird species such as Baltimore Oriole, Veery, Swainson's and Gray-cheeked Thrush, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, and Blue-headed Vireo take advantage of ACLT as a reliable rest stop during migration.

Breeding warblers at ACLT include Northern Parula, Yellow-throated Warbler, Pine Warbler, Prairie Warbler, Prothonotary Warbler, Worm-eating Warbler, Hooded Warbler, Kentucky Warbler, Louisiana Waterthrush, Ovenbird , American Redstart, and Common Yellowthroat.

The list of migratory warblers who pause at ACLT on the way to and from their breeding grounds is even longer. The more commonly seen species include Blue-winged, Chestnut-sided, Magnolia, Cape May, Black-throated Blue, Black-throated Green, Blackpoll, Black-and-White, Palm, Yellow, and Canada Warblers, as well as Northern Waterthrush. Less often observed are Swainson's Warbler, Mourning Warbler, Nashville Warbler, and Blackburnian Warbler.

American Chestnut Land Trust is big enough that it never feels over-run with other people. If you wish to explore different areas, however, a variety of other birding sites lie within 30 minutes of Prince Frederick. From north to south the list includes North Beach Marsh and Chesapeake Railroad Trail - about 20 minutes north of Prince Frederick. To the south, Battle Creek Cypress Swamp – one of the northernmost Cypress Swamps in the U.S. - is just 20 minutes south of Prince Frederick. Twenty-five minutes south of Prince Frederick, located on the Patuxent River, is Jefferson Patterson State Park. Twenty to thirty minutes south of Prince Frederick are Flag Ponds Nature Park and Calvert Cliffs State Park. Both are situated on the Chesapeake Bay. For more information on these sites, consult the link to the Calvert County Birding Trail site: *https://www.calvertcountymd.gov/3303/Birding*.

View of Parker's Creek from the Shore

Directions:

NORTH SIDE PARKING: 676 Double Oak Road, Prince Frederick, MD 20678

From Washington D.C., Baltimore, Annapolis, or other points north, travel south on Route 4 or Route 2 to Prince Frederick.

From Route 4 in Prince Frederick, turn east onto Dares Beach Road/MD 402 (opposite Safeway). Go straight thru

Spotlight: American Chestnut Land Trust

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round-about. Continue 2.4 miles to Double Oak Road. Turn right onto Double Oak Road. Continue 1.5 miles to ACLT's gravel driveway (with entrance sign) on the left. Turn left onto the gravel driveway. Continue 0.4 miles to gravel parking area. Porta-potties available at this parking area.

Additional north side parking is available at the end of Double Oak Road Trail. Instead of turning onto the gravel driveway, continue straight on paved road. It quickly brings you to a small parking area at the trailhead of Double Oak Road Trail.

SOUTH SIDE PARKING: 1985 Scientists Cliffs Road, Port Republic, MD 20676

From Dares Beach Road in Prince Frederick/ MD 402 , go south on Route 4. Travel 5 miles to Parkers Creek Road. Following the American Chestnut Land Trust signs, turn left onto Parker's Creek Road. Continue 0.4 miles to Scientists Cliffs Road and turn right. Proceed on Scientists Cliffs Road 0.9 miles until you see a parking area and a small barn on your left. There is a single porta potty at the parking area.

Spotlight on:

Mill Creek MOS Sanctuary

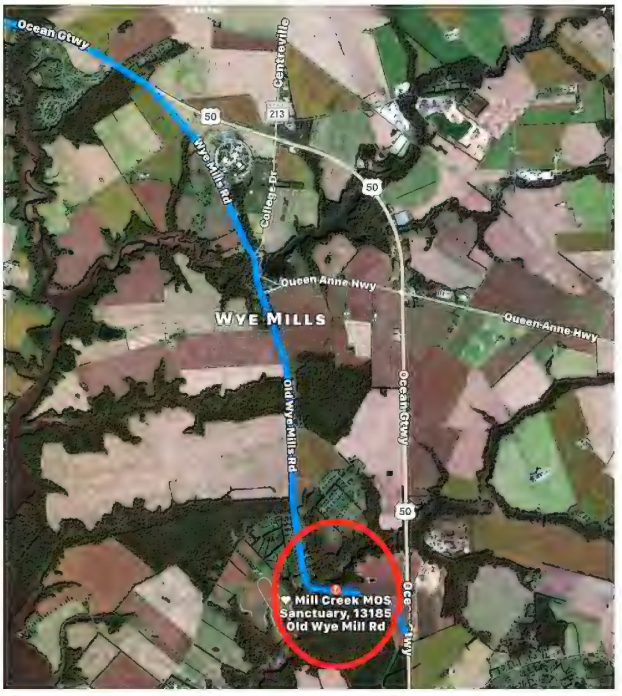
Talbot County

By Marcia Watson, Jan Reese, and Jeremy Castle

Note: This article is the eighth in a series spotlighting the ten sanctuaries owned by the Maryland Ornithological Society. The MOS sanctuaries are spread across the state from Garrett County to Somerset County, but the majority are little-known and seldom visited. Yet all the sanctuaries have something to offer the birder, naturalist, or conservationist.

The high fluted notes of a Wood Thrush, the gentle sounds of running stream water, and the rustle of swaying leaves on the forested topography of Mill Creek Sanctuary lure birders to take a short stroll through this prime coastal plain habitat. The sanctuary provides a welcome respite from the traffic flowing along its doorstep on the busy US Route 50 corridor.

Mill Creek Sanctuary consists of 156 acres located about two miles south of the village of Wye Mills in Talbot County. The eponymous **Mill Creek** is a defining feature of the sanctuary, flowing south along the western border of the property. The fresh water of Mill Creek flows into Skipton Creek, and from there to the Wye River and then the Miles River. The Miles, in turn, empties into Eastern Bay, which connects with the main stem of the Chesapeake Bay. Eastern Bay is only about seven miles from Mill Creek Sanctuary, as the crow flies.



Location of Mill Creek in Talbot County

The topography of the sanctuary is largely characterized by forested upland traversed by several east-west drainage ravines that carry water west into Mill Creek. Some of these ravines may be up to 40 feet deep at their mouth. Mill Creek flows through a flood plain characterized by non-tidal herbaceous wetlands, scrub-shrub, and marginal herbaceous tidal wetlands. Some of these habitats extend into the base of the larger ravines, creating pockets of wetlands.

The upland portion of the sanctuary consists of deciduous forest dominated by Tulip-tree, various oak species, Mockernut Hickory, American Beech, Sycamore, Red Maple, Tupelo, and Black Cherry, with many Tulip-trees and American Beeches exceeding 30 inches in diameter at breast height. The large Tulip- trees are located on steep slopes and thus escaped the last timber harvest in 1963, before MOS acquired the sanctuary, while the American Beeches escaped timber harvest because they had no value.

Stands of conifers are scattered at a few locations. Ground cover and understory are lacking in the upland forest because of shading from the dense canopy and because of deer browse, but the lower lying areas and the edges have abundant understory trees, shrubs, and ground cover. Over 400 different plant species have been identified on the sanctuary grounds.

MD Route 662/Old Wye Mills Road runs east-west through the sanctuary, dividing it into two tracts. The **Main Tract** of the sanctuary lies south of Route 662 and consists of 108 acres purchased by the Talbot County Chapter of MOS in 1964, plus an additional 17 acres donated by Marguerite

Spotlight on: Mill Creek MOS Sanctuary

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Applewhaite Dudley in 1965, containing forested upland and the heads of some drainage ravines.

The **Spring Memorial Tract** lies north of Route 662 and is composed of 30 acres donated by Mrs. Royce (Harriet) Spring in 1965 in memory of her late husband; this land consists of steep slopes and floodplain on the east side of Mill Creek. A granite marker on the north side of Route 662, near the bridge over Mill Creek, has an inlaid bronze plaque commemorating the gift of the Spring Memorial Tract. An additional 1.3-acre parcel was donated by Edward Boyd in 1971; this small parcel of sloped land lies on the northwest side of the bridge over Mill Creek.

Spring Memorial Tract dedication marker. Photo by Wayne Bell.

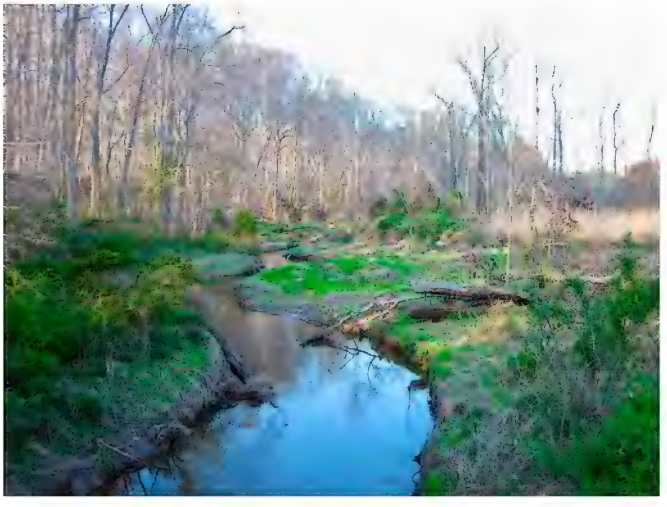
A parking area that can hold up to eight cars is located on the south side of Route 662, just east of a brick house at #13138 Old Wye Mills Road. An inconspicuous metal gate leading into the lot is kept closed but not locked. The parking area provides a sanctuary sign, a bench, and a weather-proof bulletin board. Parking on the road shoulder of Route 662, despite space available near the bridge over Mill Creek, is not recommended because of the possibility of theft or vandalism.

A trail from the parking area heads south down a slope, crossing a drainage ravine and wetland before turning west toward Mill Creek. A **shelter with a brick fireplace and picnic table** is located along this trail, which is marked with pink-and-white ribbon trail markers and reflective buttons placed at eye-level on tree trunks. The Talbot County Chapter of MOS financed the construction of the shelter, brick fireplace, and large picnic table. A plaque on the fireplace commemorates club member Nita Henry Nevius (1891 – 1966), with the inscription: "This memorial fireplace reflects her warmth and enthusiasm." From the shelter, the trail makes a loop of about a mile in length through part of the Main Tract, providing views of the Mill Creek floodplain at several locations.

Sanctuary picnic shelter. Photo by Wayne Bell.

A faint trail following the boundary line of the Main Tract creates a longer loop of about 1.6 miles. The boundary is clearly marked with fresh blue paint marks on trees as well as older MOS Sanctuary signs.

The western boundary of the Spring Memorial Tract follows the arc of the streambed of **Mill Creek**, while the eastern border is jagged and follows the forest margin where it abuts open farm fields to the east. The fields are not part of the sanctuary. Starting at its northeast corner, the Spring Memorial Tract abuts a **power line cut** that runs north-south, parallel to a portion of US Route 50. Originally, the sanctuary extended all the way to Route 50, but years ago, MOS ceded land to the power company as well as to the Maryland Department of Transportation to accommodate widening of Route 50.



The Mill Creek floodplain. Photo by Wayne Bell.

Spotlight on: Mill Creek MOS Sanctuary

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In the **Spring Memorial Tract**, a short foot-trail heads north from Rout 662 at the stone memorial marker, generally paralleling Mill Creek. The trail peters out after about a quarter-mile. A good view of Mill Creek's floodplain can be had from an old earthen dike a short distance from the stone marker.

The Talbot Bird Club members have done much to sustain and manage Mill Creek Sanctuary, holding periodic work days and scheduled field trips as well as arranging for a deer management program. The work days often focus on trail and bridge maintenance and refreshing the boundary markings.

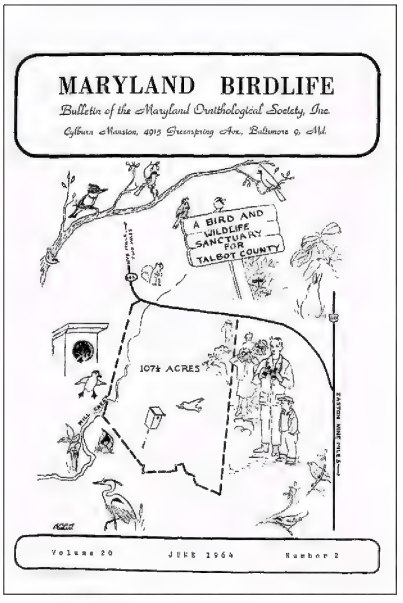
Sanctuary workday team, November 12, 2011. Photo by Danny Poet.

Bettye Maki, president of the Talbot Bird Club, commented: "Mill Creek is unlike any other property I have visited on the Eastern Shore. There are picturesque views looking from high hills into the river, or over the terrain and what rare fun to walk down a steep hillside, cross a bridge, then clamber up the other side. At the right time of the year there are interesting mushrooms of a variety of unbelievable shapes and colors."

MOS asks all visitors to stay on the trails in order to avoid damage to the vegetation. Also note that Mill Creek Sanctuary is **closed from September 1 through January 31** every year for deer management. MOS decided to implement deer management, entering an agreement with a professional deer hunting guide, because of severe browsing damage caused by deer to understory saplings, shrubs, and the groundcover layer. Vegetation damage has had a negative impact on the ecology of the sanctuary, and MOS hopes that with time, the vegetation may recover to provide habitat more conducive to nesting birds.

Jeff Effinger, the current sanctuary manager, observed: "The deer management program has been fairly successful.Some plant life, such as American Strawberry Plant, are once again appearing in a number of places and the browse line is disappearing."

Upon its acquisition in 1964, Mill Creek Sanctuary became the third sanctuary in the MOS sanctuary system, preceded by Rock Run (a leased property in Harford County) in 1960 and Carey Run (Garrett County) in 1962. The acquisition caused great excitement in the Talbot Bird Club and MOS. The cover of the June 1964 issue of *Maryland Birdlife* displayed a map of the sanctuary hand-drawn by local artist Katherine L. Tillinghast. She surrounded the map with lively little pictographs of some of the flora and fauna to be found there. The pictographs are so vivid they practically jump off the page. A group of adults and children are shown near a sign with the words "A Bird and Wildlife Sanctuary for Talbot County" with a raccoon nestled at the base of the sign. Although the drawing is in black-and-white, it is easy to recognize among the little illustrations a Belted Kingfisher, flycatcher, chickadee, squirrel, rabbit, young Wood Ducks jumping out of a nest box, Great Blue Heron, and Common Yellowthroat. Additionally there is a possible Yellow Warbler and a couple other birds; a Skunk Cabbage just emerging from the ground and Jack-in-the-Pulpit. Thus the cover art neatly summed up the ecosystems at Mill Creek.


MARYLAND BIRDLIFE
Bulletin of the Maryland Ornithological Society, Inc.
Cylburn Mansion, 4915 Greenspring Ave., Baltimore 9, Md.
A BIRD AND WILDLIFE SANCTUARY FOR TALBOT COUNTY
107½ ACRES
Volume 20 JUNE 1964 Number 2

Cover of Maryland Birdlife, June 1964.

We know more about the geology, hydrology, soils, history, and biological diversity of Mill Creek Sanctuary than of any other MOS sanctuary, thanks to a mammoth effort that began in 1984, when Jan Reese (the Mill Creek sanctuary manager at the time), Paul Noell, Laurel Brown, and Jeff Effinger conducted a 14-month study of the sanctuary. The team produced a comprehensive 82-page report, *MOS Mill Creek Preserve, Talbot County: Resources, Preservation, Management*(1985), that includes lists of the sanctuary's fungi, vascular plants, and animals, as well as material on soils, geology and hydrology, and the history of the

Spotlight on: Mill Creek MOS Sanctuary

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property back to colonial times. The report concludes with recommendations for protecting the property as well as for promoting its use for education, scientific research, and passive recreation. Though much has changed at the sanctuary since 1984, the report provides an important baseline and deep pool of information upon which MOS can formulate present and future management plans despite the lapse in time.

The 1985 report by Jan Reese and his team was followed in 2001 by a survey and report undertaken by the Maryland Partners in Flight (PIF) Habitat Management Committee on behalf of MOS. The *Sanctuary Habitat Survey and Management Recommendations* report covered Mill Creek and four other MOS sanctuaries, and was authored by Frederick Fallon, Jane Hill, the late Wanda Cole, Jane Fallon, and D. Daniel Boone. The PIF team visited Mill Creek to compare its condition to the earlier study. The report noted that the sanctuary was suffering from an onslaught of invasive plants; suggested that the sanctuary might be subject to damage as surrounding parcels became developed; and noted the presence of obvious deer damage to the vegetation.

Sanctuary leaders ponder what to do next: left to right, former Sanctuary Committee Chair Dotty Mumford, Danny Poet, Jan Reese. Photo by Doug Forsell, circa 2007.

Mill Creek Sanctuary has hosted several more recent research studies. For example, Jim Brighton of the Maryland Biodiversity Project conducted a one-night Nocturnal Insect Survey on May 22, 2021, and documented 133 species of insects and other arthropods. Jim says that this was his best-ever result for a one-night study. In addition, Sam Droege, head of the Native Bee Lab at Eastern Ecological Science Center at Patuxent Research Refuge, has been conducting frequent sampling of native bees at the sanctuary and reports a high diversity of bee species. The results of these studies provide a window into the overall diversity of the sanctuary; we hope that additional surveys can be undertaken to give us a more complete understanding of the sanctuary's current conditions.

Jan Reese commented: "I have been familiar with this sanctuary since it was purchased by the Talbot County Chapter of MOS as a freshly harvested forest. I have seen it through unwanted trespassers, vandalism, poaching, acres lost to highway and utility right-of-way easements, fires, illegal teen drinking parties, hideout for stolen cars, severe ravine erosion, tree cutting, encroachment of farming practices from adjoining fields, ingress of invasive plants, trash dumping (including a refrigerator & cooking range dumped in Mill Stream from the bridge), disappearance of rare and threatened species, and severe deer browse denuding the forest understory. Perhaps as egregious has been the failure of MOS members to utilize the sanctuary. The sanctuary is there for all MOS members to enjoy, and going forward I hope it will become appreciated with visitation, documentation of its biota and volunteerism in its maintenance up-keep."

MOS Convention field trip group navigates one of the hilly trails. Photo by Marcia Watson.

Additional details on Mill Creek Sanctuary can be found in "Know your Sanctuaries - Mill Creek," an article by Dickson J. Preston in the March 1971 issue of *Maryland Birdlife*.

The reports and articles mentioned here can be easily accessed via links available in the Mill Creek MOS Sanctuary entry in the online MOS Birder's Guide to Maryland and DC at https://birdersguidemddc.org/site/mill-creek- mos-sanctuary/. For an armchair tour of the sanctuary, see a brief YouTube video posted by former Sanctuary Chair Dominic Nucifora at https://youtu.be/0KR2sq-zDXQ.

Two other MOS Sanctuaries, Marengo Woods and Myrtle Simons Pelot, are within a half-hour drive of Mill Creek, making this a nice trio of sanctuaries to visit. Other good birding spots nearby include Chesapeake Bay

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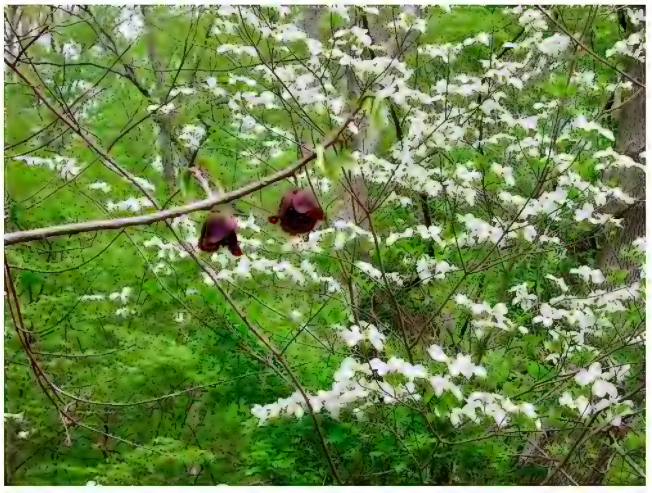
Environmental Center (Horsehead), Pickering Creek Audubon Sanctuary, Tuckahoe State Park and Adkins Arboretum, Wye Island Natural Resource Management Area, and on Kent Island: Ferry Point Park, Matapeake Clubhouse & Beach/Matapeake Fishing Pier & Boat Ramp, and Terrapin Nature Park.



American Dogwood in bloom, with two flowers of Paw-Paw in foreground. (dark bell-shapes hanging from twig). Photo by Wayne Bell.

Birdlife:

The eBird hotspot for Mill Creek MOS Sanctuary includes 133 species to date, with 211 checklists submitted. The bird list compiled by Jan Reese, et al. as part of their 1984 biological inventory includes 116 species and is quite similar to the eBird list. We invite you to contribute to the knowledge of bird life on the sanctuary by submitting an eBird checklist whenever you visit, especially now that we are in the last two years of data collection for the Third Breeding Bird Atlas. Even a brief roadside stop can supply valuable information.

Waterfowl can be found as flyovers or in the waters of Mill Creek, or occasionally in the larger wetlands of the Main Tract. Canada Geese, Mallards, and Wood Ducks are the most commonly observed species. **Northern Bobwhite** used to occur on the edges of the surrounding agricultural fields, but have not been observed since 1990. **Wild Turkeys** are still abundant and are thought to breed in the sanctuary. **Mourning Doves**,**Yellow-billed Cuckoos**, **Chimney Swifts**, and **Ruby-throated Hummingbirds** are also local breeders.

Shorebirds are represented only by Killdeer and American Woodcock, with possibly a Greater Yellowlegs or two in the Mill Creek floodplain during spring migration. **Gulls** are present as flyovers, commuting from large nearby bodies of water: these include Laughing, Ring-billed, Herring and Great Black-backed.

Great Blue Herons are commonly seen through most of the year. An MOS Convention field trip in the spring of 2019 found an active Great Blue Heron rookery along the banks of Mill Creek in the Main Tract. **Great Egrets** and **Green Herons** may also be present.

The most conspicuous **raptors** seen in adjoining open areas include Black and Turkey Vultures, Ospreys, Red-tailed Hawks, Bald Eagles, and **American Kestrels**, while Red-shouldered, Cooper's and Sharp-shinned Hawks may sometimes be seen in the forest.**Barred Owls** nest at the sanctuary and may be relatively easy to find.

Belted Kingfishers can be heard and/or seen flying and hunting along Mill Creek. You might also see **Northern Rough-winged, Tree, and Barn Swallows** or **Purple Martins** in flight.

The forest holds a full set of **woodpeckers**, including Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers (winter) and year-round populations of Red-bellied, Downy, Hairy, Pileated, and Northern Flicker. There are two reports of Red-headed Woodpeckers, separated by twenty years: one in 2002 and one in 2022.

Nesting flycatchers include Eastern Wood-Pewee, Acadian Flycatcher, Eastern Phoebe, Great Crested Flycatcher, and Eastern Kingbird. Both White-eyed and Red-eyed **Vireos** nest at the sanctuary, and Warbling, Yellow-throated, and Blue-headed Vireos may be found during fall of spring migration.

Blue Jays and **American Crows** are noisily apparent all year long; **Fish Crows** come by occasionally. **Small forest birds** include abundant Carolina Chickadees and Tufted Titmice (year-round); Ruby-crowned and Golden-crowned Kinglets (winter); White-breasted Nuthatches (year-round), Red-breasted Nuthatches, and Brown Creepers (the latter two in winter); and Blue-gray Gnatcatchers (spring and summer).

Carolina Wrens are local breeders. **House Wrens** are surprisingly uncommon, while **Winter Wrens** are easy to find from late October through March. **Gray Catbirds, Northern Mockingbirds, and Brown Thrashers** all breed locally.

Mill Creek Sanctuary provides outstanding habitat for **thrushes**. Nesting species include Eastern Bluebird, American Robin, and Wood Thrush. Hermit Thrushes overwinter, and Veeries and Swainson's Thrushes may be found during migration.

Cedar Waxwings may be seen bouncing though the treetops or wetlands, as well as in the wetlands where fruit-bearing shrubs grow. **House Sparrows** are almost absent. **House Finches** may be present in small numbers, while **American Goldfinches** are abundant. **Purple Finches** and **Pine Siskins** might be found in winter during irruption years.

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The native **sparrow** assortment includes Chipping (spring-summer), Fox (fall migration and winter), White-throated (migration and winter), Song (year-round), and Swamp (migration and winter), plus Dark-eyed Junco (migration and winter), and Eastern Towhee (year-round).

Orchard Orioles and **Baltimore Orioles** both nest locally. Eastern Meadowlarks may make an appearance in nearby fields in late June, but they don't stay around long. The power line right-of-way near the Spring Memorial Tract is almost always overflowing with **European Starlings**. **Red-winged Blackbirds**, **Common Grackles**, and **Brown-headed Cowbirds** are all abundant in the nearby fields and in the treetops near Mill Creek.

The **warbler** list includes 21 species, including these confirmed and possible breeders: Ovenbird, Louisiana Waterthrush, Kentucky Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, Northern Parula, American Redstart, and Pine Warbler. Yellow-rumped Warblers are easy to find in the winter.

Scarlet Tanagers nest in the forest and may be found during migration as well as the breeding saeson, and **Summer Tanagers** are also possible. **Northern Cardinals**, **Blue Grosbeaks**, and **Indigo Buntings** all breed in the area. **Rose-breasted Grosbeaks** may be relatively easy to find during migration.

Conservation Value:

Mill Creek Sanctuary provides valuable natural habitat that supports birds and other wildlife in an area of the upper eastern Shore that was traditionally dedicated to farming, but has now been seeing rapid development over the last few decades.

The entire Mill Creek Sanctuary lies within an area classified by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) as a Targeted Ecological Area(TEA). TEAs are lands identified by DNR as the most ecologically valuable areas in the State; they are considered the "Best of the Best" and receive priority for conservation by the State. For information on how DNR prioritizes land for conservation, see https://dnr.maryland.gov/land/Documents/GreenPrint-lands-are-important.pdf.

Mill Creek Sanctuary is classified by MD DNR as Tier 2 – Extremely Significant for Biodiversity Conservation under their Bionet – Biological Diversity Conservation Network initiative, which ranks undeveloped properties at five levels, with Tier 1 representing the most valuable lands for biodiversity. In this categorization system, Mill Creek Sanctuary receives

- 5 stars out of 5 for providing "Habitat Connectivity."
- 5 stars out of 5 for providing "Rare Species and Wildlife Habitat."
- 5 stars out of 5 as "Future Wetland Habitat," areas important for inland wetland migration resulting from sea level rise.

For background on the BioNet Biological Diversity Conservation Initiative, see https://dnr.maryland.gov/wildlife/Documents/BIONET_FactSheet.pdf.

The wetlands adjacent to Mill Creek and some of its ravine drainages within the sanctuary have been designated by the State of Maryland as "Wetlands of Special State Concern." Such wetlands, with rare, threatened, or endangered species or unique habitat, receive special attention and protection under Maryland law. Additionally, the sanctuary is in a Sensitive Species Project Review Area, meaning that any planned development or disruption of the habitat undergoes extra scrutiny by the state.

Bridge across stream near parking area. Photo by Marcia Watson.

The entire sanctuary lies within an area identified by DNR as important for Forest Interior Dwelling Species (FIDS). Mill Creek MOS Sanctuary is home to several FIDS, including Northern Parula, Kentucky Warbler, Louisiana Waterthrush, Acadian Flycatcher, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Wood Thrush, and Scarlet Tanager.

DNR's Parcel Evaluation Tool provides a financial analysis of conservation benefits derived from ecosystem services of natural habitat, such as removal of air-borne pollutants, groundwater filtration, carbon sequestration, and other factors. This tool indicates that Mill Creek Sanctuary provides over **$3,200 of benefits per acre per year**, or **almost a half-million dollars-worth of annual ecological benefits from the entire 156 acres.** We all benefit in very real ways from the existence of Mill Creek Sanctuary.

Spotlight on: Mill Creek MOS Sanctuary

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Visitation Policies:

The following are prohibited: hunting or trapping, except as part of the authorized deer management program; weapons, alcohol, or drugs; ATVs or other motorized off-road vehicles; littering or dumping; camping; fires (except in the fireplace at the picnic shelter); cutting of wood or removal of downed trees; smoking (fire hazard); removal of any animals or plants.

Pets must be kept on a leash and you must pick up after your pet and remove the pet waste from the sanctuary. Please control your pet to avoid damage to delicate plants, and don't let your dog flush waterfowl or shorebirds.

Fishing is permitted; an appropriate freshwater fishing license from MD DNR is required.

Wheelchair Access:

The trails in the sanctuary are not wheelchair-accessible. There is relatively good birding from or near the car at the parking area or from the road shoulder near the Route 662 bridge over Mill Creek.

Trail map. Trail along south and east boundaries of main tract not shown.

Directions:

Mill Creek MOS Sanctuary is located on the Eastern Shore, south of the town of Wye Mills, and is reached via MD Route 662 west of US Route 50. For directions and maps, go to https://birdersguidemddc.org/site/mill-creek-mos-sanctuary/.

At a Glance

Street Address: MD Route 662 (Old Wye Mills Road), Skipton, MD 21657; parking area is just east of brick house at #13138.

GPS Coordinates (parking area): 38.909833, -76.068037

Hours: Daylight hours, February 1 through August 31. Closed September 1 through January 31 for deer management.

Cost: Free. Donations to the MOS Sanctuary Fund are always appreciated. Go to https://mdbirds.org/conservation/refuges-sanctuaries/ #toggle-id-4 to donate online.

Parking: Gravel parking area for about eight cars on the south side of Route 662/Old Wye Mills Road, just east of the brick house at #13138. Gate is kept closed but not locked. Be sure to close the gate after pulling your car into the lot and again when you leave. Be aware that there are roadside ditches to either side of the driveway through the gate - don't get stuck in a ditch! There is also space to park several cars on the road shoulders near the MD Route 662 bridge over Mill Creek. However, it is not recommended to leave your car on the roadside for a long visit, as there may be theft or vandalism. We recommend that visitors park at the gated parking area.

Gate to parking area. Photo by Marcia Watson.

Tips: MOS conducts a managed deer hunt at Mill Creek Sanctuary, and for this reason the sanctuary is closed annually from September 1 through January 31. There is also hunting on adjacent private lands, so at any time, be aware of hunting seasons and plan your visit accordingly. No restrooms.

Best Seasons: February through August.

Breeding Bird Atlas Block: Wye Mills SW

About the authors: *Jeremy Castle is the Chair of the MOS Sanctuary Committee and is a member of the Patuxent Bird Club; he lives in Washington, DC. Jan Reese is a member of the Talbot Bird Club and former sanctuary manager for Mill Creek. Marcia Watson is the President of the Patuxent Bird Club and the secretary of the MOS Sanctuary Committee.*

Winter Birding on Cayman Brac

By Robin Todd, Ph.D

This is an account of birding on Cayman Brac (rhymes with 'stack'), one of the Cayman Islands' two Lesser islands, from mid-January to the first days of March this year. Hyacinth is from the Brac, and still regards it as home, hence our long stay. We have stayed on the island many times, hence there are a few comments on previous visits.

The Brac, (which measures only 12 miles by 1 mile) is much quieter and less developed than the main island of Grand Cayman. When birding on the Brac, it quickly becomes apparent that there are a few ubiquitous, resident species. Prescott (1997) advised that 'about 70% of the bird action' on the Bluff is from Bananaquits and Caribbean Elaenias, therefore it is best to learn every sound and field mark of these two species so as to focus on anything which is different. The Bluff is the densely forested, karst limestone plateau, which still makes up most the interior of the island. Another frequently encountered resident is the Northern Mockingbird.

Migrant warblers recorded included Palm (by far the commonest), and Yellow-rumped (which were unusually common this year). Less numerous were:

American Redstart

Cape May Warbler (frequent)

Black and White Warbler

Black-throated Blue Warbler

Northern Parula

Northern Waterthrush (which frequent the dwarf red mangroves that fringe the shallow ponds at the west end of the island)

Ovenbird

Prairie Warbler

The resident Vitelline warblers are common and, like the Bananaquit and Elaenia, respond much more readily to pishing than do any North American species that I have encountered. I did not see any Yellow-throated warblers on this visit, but these are usually frequent winter visitors. Resident Yellow warblers were present in the mangrove.

Red-legged Thrushes are uncommon, skulking residents which make up for their singularly unmelodic song with smart colors. A few wintering Gray Catbirds were seen on the Bluff.

Common Ground Doves were not common on this visit. More frequent were the unobtrusive Zenaida doves and the striking, but shy White-crowned Pigeons. These large, strong-flying birds regularly commute to and from nearby Little Cayman. I only saw a few White-winged Doves, but these were plentiful on previous visits.

Two tyrant flycatchers occur on the Brac; the Loggerhead Kingbird and the Gray Kingbird. I saw a few of the former (shy resident species), and none of the latter (common and very noticeable summer breeders). Thick--billed Vireos were evident mostly by their distinctive song. Yellow-faced Grassquits were heard, but only on a few occasions.

The Cayman Brac subspecies of the Cuban Parrot was much more often heard than seen. They blend in remarkably well with green canopy foliage, as they feed on fruit or berries, only to become apparent when they dash away, cackling loudly. Small groups of Smooth-billed Anis were seen occasionally.

We were delighted to have one of the resident Barn Owls roost on a coconut palm in Hyacinth's back yard. It paid us no attention, but leaned slightly forward, as though in deep thought. We glimpsed a Merlin on a few occasions, but did not see any Peregrines on this visit.

Barn owl roosting in backyard, North East Bay

Sadly, one of the most common birds on the islands is now the Domestic Jungle Fowl. Recent hurricanes resulted in these birds escaping, and they now breed in the wild and are common along all the roads and near habitation. I reluctantly started recording them on my eBird lists. They probably compete with native doves for food.

Semipalmated Plovers, Ruddy Turnstones, and Spotted Sandpipers frequented the shores in ones and twos. A group of Black-necked Stilts was present in the western ponds. These ponds are the best sites for duck and shore birds. Least Sandpiper, Black-bellied Plover, Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs, Short-billed Dowitcher, and Willet were also seen. One Killdeer was a relative rarity for the island.

Great and Snowy egrets were always present on the ponds at the west end of the island. Green herons stalked the shores. I saw only two Yellow-crowned Night herons on this visit; one was a very tame juvenile. Previously these

Winter Birding on Cayman Brac

Continued from Page 19

have been more common. Tri-colored Herons were also present, as were the occasional Great Blue and Little Blue herons.

A friendly immature Yellow-crowned Night Heron, Westerly Ponds

Blue-winged Teal was always present on the western ponds and are regular winter visitors. Lesser Scaup, which are uncommon visitors, were present on Salt Pond; a high of 10 was recorded by another birder. There is a breeding colony of West Indian Whistling duck, which have become tame through feeding. Their ungainly flight, with legs dangling and crazy calls, give them an air of craziness. Common Gallinules were frequent on these ponds, with an occasional American Coot.

A small colony of Brown Boobies nest along the cliff edges and on the boulder strewn beaches at the eastern end of the island, as well a few spots further west along the south shore. Sadly these birds are now being ravaged by feral cats and rats. The cats kill both adults and chicks while the rats steal the eggs. Booby numbers have declined sharply, from the 'thousands' reported by local people in the first part of the 20th Century, to less than 100 today. In the 2022 nesting season, one source reported only 13 of the 42 recorded eggs fledging successfully, while another advised me that the actual number was probably lower. The Cayman Department of the Environment has now set up a program to live trap the cats. Any cats caught without a microchip are euthanized. Cats that have microchips are returned to their owners. This is causing some controversy on the island. Rat traps have also been set. Initial results are promising. However, despite these last-ditch efforts, this colony could be extinguished in the next few years.

Brown Booby parent with chick by the Lighthouse trail on the Bluff

White-tailed Tropicbirds breed in holes in the cliff face of the Bluff. These graceful birds arrive early each year to breed. Their numbers have declined markedly in recent year, down from 800 in 1985 to 200 in 2003 and probably fewer than 100 today; I counted 10 at most at any one time during our visit.

Two Brown Pelicans frequented the western ponds and nearby shore. Gulls are rarely found in the Cayman Islands, but Royal terns are regular on the Brac, and Least Terns breed there in the summer.

Finally, no visit to the Brac is complete without seeing Magnificent Frigatebirds; often hanging in the wind, looking for boobies or tropic birds to chase and harry until they give up their catches. Frigatebirds are best seen when a fisherman is cleaning his catch on the shore; the birds swoop in close to retrieve pieces of fish; quite dramatic!

The Booby and Tropicbird colonies are in trouble.The Cayman Islands Government (CIG) is considering a plan which would protect these and other sea birds which nest on the islands. The following link will take you to the Species Conservation Act: https://conservation.ky/seabirds/.

Please consider writing or emailing the relevant Cayman Islands Government Cabinet Ministers and the Member for the Brac to urge them to support this act. If you are travel-oriented, you might say that you hope (or plan) to visit the Cayman Islands to see these birds (other sea bird species breed on Grand Cayman and Little Cayman). Here are the key legislators and the correct salutation:

Premier: Hon. Wayne G. Panton - wayne.panton@gov.ky

Deputy Premier: **Hon. Juliana Y. O'Connor-Connolly, JP, MP -** juliana.connolly@gov.ky

MP for Cayman Brac: Hon. Moses. I.Kirkconnell JP - moses.kirkonnell@gov.ky

Begin your message with 'Dear Premier/Deputy Premier/Mr.'respectively.

Thank you for your support!

Robin G. Todd PhD, BCE-emeritus

MOS Conservation Committee Chair

1 Prescott, K. The Birds of Cayman Brac and Where to Find Them With Driving and Hiking Maps.1997. National Trust for the Cayman Islands

ANNE ARUNDEL

Juanita and I enjoyed a birding and family visit trip in Southwest Arizona in early March (1-10) and managed to see 74 different species among the 12 different locations visited. Based in Tucson, we ventured out to Sweetwater, Agua Caliente, Isabella Lee Nature Preserve, Oracle, Tucson Desert Museum, San Pedro RNCA, Ramsey Canyon Preserve, Historic Canoa Ranch, Tucson Audubon Mason Center, Arthur Pack Regional Park, and Scottsdale.

Highlights included watching three Grey Hawks establishing their territory at San Pedro and Harris's Hawks hunting as a family group. Hummingbirds included Anna's, Broad-billed and Costa's, both in the wild and at feeders. Other species included Phainopepla, Abert's Towhee, Townsend's Solitaire, Townsend's Warbler, Ladder-backed Woodpecker, Green-tailed Towhee, Pyrrhuloxia, Vermillion Flycatcher, Greater Roadrunner, and Cactus Wren, along with the usual suspects. Most species were seen at multiple sites, and White-crowned Sparrows were everywhere.

Interspersed with the birding we visited with friends and family and took in some local sites and activities. At the University of Arizona, the Linda McCartney photographic exhibit was amazing. We ziplined with friends and our daughter in Oracle, AZ, and had a behind-the-scenes tour of the Desert Museum. Our daughter is a volunteer and works behind the scenes with the animals every Sunday. We also took in a Cubbies spring training game in Mesa.

All in all, it was a packed trip, and we needed to return home to rest. *Pat Tate*

Trip to the end of the Earth

My wife, Carol Swan, and I embarked Christmas Day on a 24-day eco-expedition to the end of the Earth, traveling 13,600 miles round trip by air to Ushuaia, Argentina and another 4,100 miles over 18 days at sea. We landed by Zodiac in Antarctica, the South Shetlands, South Georgia and Falkland Islands. Two prior days were spent birding in and around Buenos Aires and another day in Ushuaia.I saw 127 lifers including the endemic Falkland Flightless Steamer Duck, Antarctic Shag, and the South Georgia Pipit, the latter bird being the southernmost breeding passerine in the world.

Patagonian Sierra Finch, Photo by Carol Swan

We joined a VENT birding group of 18 and became known as "the bird group" to the crew and our 92 fellow ocean travelers. All travelers aboard were most interested in seeing penguins, and we marveled at each of the eight species we saw.

We were able to walk near thousands of penguins at breeding colonies and also observe them from our Zodiacs. These charismatic flightless birds never failed to amaze and amuse us as they went about their daily routines raising a new generation.

Falkland Steamer Duck, Photo by Carol Swan

Fantastical ice and land view-scapes of wondrous wildness amazed us. As I used my binoculars, Carol clicked away on her camera.

We penetrated farther south than usual into Antarctica's Weddell Sea and found a few subadult Emperor Penguins, the largest penguin of 18 species at only a little over 4 feet in height. The smallest seen was the demure but striking 23" Rockhopper. Sadly,11 penguin species are listed as Globally Threatened with some declining dramatically,

likely from global warming and the lack of food sources like krill and fish.

Penguins had been exploited for food by sailors as early as 1520 when the crew of a ship under Ferdinand Magellan was navigating around the tip of South America. A crew member wrote:"We filled the five ships with them for an hour. They do not fly and feed on fish, and they are so fat they were difficult to pluck, but we took off their skin." These birds became known as Magellanic Penguins.

King Penguins were indiscriminately slaughtered and boiled for their oil in huge tanks, 900 at a time on South Georgia. The oil could be sold, but most often was used to cook the more valuable blubber of elephant seals. In 1867, one company boiled 405,000 penguins.

Antarctica is the coldest, windiest, driest and highest continent, with temperatures reaching as low as -129 F. Glaciers, ice caps and mountainous icy peaks cover 99.6% of its land mass. After landing on the Antarctic continent, we headed north to South Georgia Island and passed a 117 mile long tabular iceberg that broke off the Antarctic continent several years ago.

While at sea, we searched the ocean for seabirds, whales, dolphins and seals and spotted 5 species of albatrosses, including the Wandering Albatross with the largest wingspan of any bird at 12 feet. Black-browed were the most common and we saw them nesting on the Falklands. There were 18 petrel species sighted. Most pelagic birds seen were life birds.

We saw Sei Whales feeding on massive pods of krill, exhaling through blowholes and hunting as dolphins do. We also saw Humpback, Fin and Beaked whales as well as Commerson's and Peale's dolphins. Thousands of Antarctic Fur Seals and the largest pinniped (seal) in the world, the Southern Elephant Seal, were hauled out on beaches and intermingled with nesting penguins. *Gerald Winegrad*

To read a more in depth column on this trip, see: Gerald Winegrad: Highlights of a fascinating trip to the end of the Earth | COMMENTARY–Capital Gazette And to read about penguins and their plight: Gerald Winegrad: The beloved penguin offers a cautionary tale | COMMENTARY–Capital Gazette

CECIL COUNTY

In mid-February I set out on a road trip to Florida with two goals: first, to visit the cities of Charleston, Savannah, and Saint Augustine, which were all new to me; and second, to enjoy the birds of South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida. Happy to say, I met both of my goals.

With regards to that second goal, with stops at Pinckney Island N.W.R. in Georgia, Jekyll Island in Georgia, and numerous city, county, and state parks and wildlife refuges in Florida, I was able to identify 73 species of birds. That included one life bird for me, the Limpkin. For a week I stayed at my brother-in-law's house on Lake Seminole on the west coast of Florida. I had only to walk out the back door of his house each morning to see fabulous sunrises, as well as a wonderful variety of birds. Some of those included White Ibis, Roseate Spoonbills, Little Blue, Great Blue, and Green Herons, Wood Storks, Limpkin, and the ever-present (and ever-noisy) Common Gallinules and American Coots.

A birding highlight for me was at the Orlando Wetlands Park. There, from a boardwalk and within a stretch of less than thirty yards, I observed nesting Wood Storks, nesting Roseate Spoonbills, and nesting Great Egrets. I was also able to see there, among others: Tricolored Herons, a Black-crowned Night-Heron, and many Black-bellied Whistling Ducks. The trip was definitely a great way to beat the winter blues! *Cathy Carter*

March seemed to be the perfect get-a-way opportunity for Kimberleigh and Ken Drier to head to St. John in the U.S. Virgin Islands. It was their first time back since the twin hurricanes hit the island in September of 2017. Much of the island has been restored since then. An Airbnb across the road from a small beach provided beautiful sunrises over the Caribbean as well as both the local hummingbirds, the Green-throated Carib and the Antillean Crested Hummingbird. Ken always brings a small hummingbird feeder which seems to work nicely there. It also attracts the yellow Bananaquits. From the deck Magnificent Frigatebirds, Brown Pelicans and Great Egrets could be seen flying over the bay. Upon arrival and then again when locking up the house for the final time a flock of 6 Smooth-billed Anis worked their way through the lovely gardens on the property. Always a treat.

Each day provided a new beach for snorkeling and watching the endangered Green Turtles and sting rays below the water's surface, not forgetting to mention the colorful parrotfish. Francis Bay also has a salt pond with a trail about a mile long around the perimeter. A flock of 39 Black-necked Stilts and several White-cheeked Pintail Ducks were observed there. Out on the beach Brown Boobies worked their way across the bay. An early morning drive for the sunrise atop Ram's Head had the added benefit of a mountain side covered in blooming cactus and flowering Dendrobium orchids, which Ken grows at home. Yet the highlight was the White-tailed Tropicbird, which was a first for Ken on the island and became bird number 899 on his list of North American birds. Stay tuned in the next Chapter Chatter to find out what number 900 will be, as a trip to Colorado by the time you read this will without doubt provide new species.

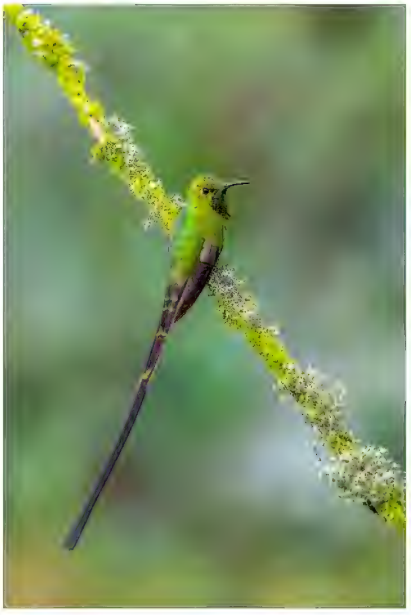
Early for here, but Yellow Warblers and Northern Waterthrush provided nice looks. The Waterthrush was also a first for Ken on St John. Back at the house, Ken threw down some bird seed which attracted Pearly-eyed Thrashers, Lesser Antillean Bullfinch and Black-faced

Grassquits. A beautiful week there as friends from home sent pictures of their deck becoming covered with snow. It was wonderful to return to one of Kimberleigh's favorite vacation spots after such a long hiatus.

Working with the Wildlife Habitat Council (WHC) and future Eagle Scout Matt Molnar, Ken Drier has had all the nest boxes at the Woodlawn Reserve in Port Deposit replaced. The WHC monitors the reserve for the Bridgestone Corporation, which used the site as a waste dump in the past. Matt worked to provide all new boxes as an Eagle Scout project. An additional 5 boxes were made to increase the number to twenty. On top of that, three owl boxes were included, as well as a Kestrel nest box. Now becomes the time to start looking for potential nesting Tree Swallows and Eastern Bluebirds. *Ken Drier*

HARFORD COUNTY

Jean and Dennis Kirkwood took a 9 day photography and birding tour to Ecuador ,using the services and lodges of ***San Jorge Ecolodges.*** This family-run company operates eight lodges throughout the various habitats of Ecuador, from the coast to the mountains to the Amazon. They package their tours to last from 5 days to 18 days and provide the transportation and guides at and between lodges. They host either photography tours or birding tours, and Jean photographed while Dennis birded. They will do private tours, or you can join the regularly-scheduled tours, which generally go twice each month. Pick-up and return to the airport in Quito is included. We stayed at 3 of the lodges, which are all situated in prime habitat, and birding from their decks could keep you busy for hours. They are proud of their operation and are flexible to meet your needs, both for photography and for target birds. Dennis saw 240 species, of which 72 were lifers, including the extremely hard to see Barred Ground-Cuckoo. Other highlights included Andean Condor, Sword-billed Hummingbird, and Toucan-Barbet. We would be happy to share more details if you are planning a trip to Ecuador. *Dennis Kirkwood, Ed.D. Newark Farms 410-692-5905.*



Black-tailed Trainbearer, Photo by Carol Swan

MONTGOMERY COUNTY

Michael Bowen writes that he and Anne Cianni spent a busy and productive week birding in early March all around the large metropolitan area of Phoenix, Arizona. "Based in the suburb of Chandler (where we saw a locally rare Lewis's Woodpecker flying around palm trees by a local ice rink!), we took in birdy areas along the Salt River both upstream and downstream of Phoenix, including the Tres Rios wetland reserve, where an unseen rail-type call turned out to be a Least Bittern. The Riparian Preserve in Gilbert has long been one of the area's top hotspots, where we saw 50 species in and around the preserve's ponds and bushy areas. The relatively new Veterans Oasis Park in Chandler was impressively productive, too.

One day we drove 2/3 of the way up to Mount Ord, Maricopa County's highest point at 7200 ft., but had to turn around because of ice and snow on the road at just under 6000 ft. We did find Bridled Titmouse, Bewick's Wren, and Spotted Towhee before heading back down to the desert. Another day we visited the Hassayampa Reserve, established by The Nature Conservancy and now owned by Maricopa County, where we enjoyed watching a breeding pair of Vermilion Flycatchers and lots of Lesser Goldfinches.

Anna's Hummingbird, Photo by Mike Bowen

The top site of the trip was the magnificent Boyce Thompson Botanical Garden near Superior in Pinal County, where the contrast between rocky canyons and cottonwood-lined streams is a birder's delight. Cactus Wren, Canyon Wren and Rock Wren all showed well there, together with several Townsend's Solitaires. On our last day in Arizona, we traveled south to the agricultural areas around Marana, where Mountain Plovers had been reported on the extensive turf grass fields. Alas, we missed the plovers, but accidentally ran into a migrating flock of 30-40 Long-billed Curlews that had just landed in an irrigated vegetable field. One hundred eighteen species in 7 days of birding was very satisfactory! Verdins were everywhere! Amazingly, though, we saw only two

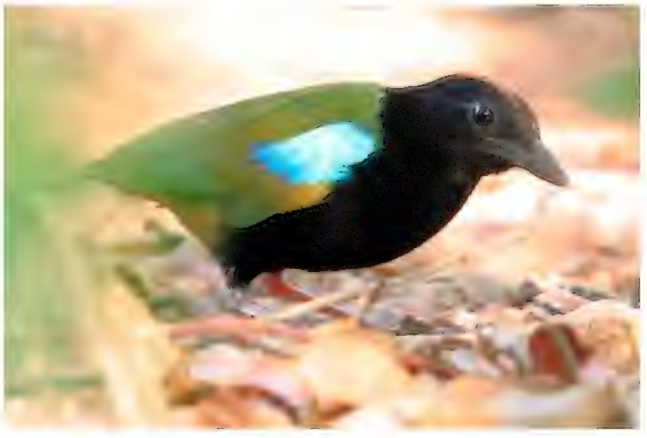
Greater Roadrunners during the week. We'd expected many more. Birding always surprises." Their eBird Trip Report can be found at:https://ebird.org/tripreport/113690?view=checklists

Gila Woodpecker, Photo by Mike Bowen

David Vierling reports on a local hotspot he thinks Maryland birders might enjoy."If you're willing to drive across the Potomac to see raptors, check out the Thunder Road eBird hotspot near Dulles Airport (Thunder Road off Old Ox Road. GPS coordinates 38.9796246975069, -77.4776090370562) A great thing about this site is that mobility-impaired people can just drive up and view all these birds without getting out of their car! I've never failed to see Northern Harriers there. Short-eared Owls nest in the NOAA facility field and come out to hunt the areas adjacent to the Dulles runways. Other birds I've seen/heard include American Woodcock, kestrel, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Cooper's Hawk, Red-shouldered Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Killdeer, and meadowlark. The site shows up in eBird as Thunder Road, but the best birding is around where Thunder Road dead-ends into Weather Service Road. The field the public can access is very self-contained and surrounded by "Keep Out" fences for the airport and NOAA."

Lesley Anne Simmons and James M. Boughton, new members of the club, wrote "In September we headed off to Western Australia, where my brother has lived for many years, for a 3 1/2 month visit. We have visited Perth many times before so are quite familiar with the birds of WA. So we decided to go further afield to find some rarities. Among our adventures was a week on Christmas Island, where we found lots of endemics, including the beautiful Golden Bosun. But as interesting as the birding was being in the middle of the Red Crab migration, when millions of crabs make their way from the interior forests to mate and lay eggs at the edge of the ocean. On a trip to Darwin, in the Northern Territories to try to find Gouldian Finches – yes! we found some -- we almost stepped on a Rainbow Pitta scrubbing around on the forest path and also found the elusive Chestnut Rail. We reaped 70 life birds in 6 days on that trip. It was a wonderful vacation, marred only by the fact that Hurricane Ian destroyed our winter home on Sanibel Island, while we were there. Rebuilding continues, and we hope to be back enjoying Roseate Spoonbills and Tricolored Herons next winter." *Chris Wright*

Gouldian Finches, Photo by James Boughton



Rainbow Pitta, Photo by James Boughton

SOUTHERN MARYLAND

My wife, Jane Kostenko, and I went on a guided tour of Budapest, Vienna, and Prague in February. There was little free time, and birding was not our primary goal on this trip. But, when you're away, always carry binoculars! In tourist situations; they often come in handy when trying to read distant street signs or, obviously, looking at birds.

In Budapest, we dedicated an afternoon/evening to a walk from the hotel to the west bank of the Danube to watch the sun set on the Parliament building. It's quite a spectacle in the golden hour, then as the sky darkens and when it gets dark enough, the building is lit from the grounds. As we waited on the river bank, hundreds of

Black-headed Gulls flew in to roost on river boats and buildings near the water, stopping to catch one final, tasty morsel before settling in for the night. Also, a large group of perhaps 75 Hooded Crows flew in to roost in trees surrounding the Parliament building.

Vienna was far less bird-friendly than Budapest. But Stadtpark, a postage stamp sized green space, lay in between our hotel and the historic downtown. We picked up one of two lifers here: Eurasian Nuthatch. Again, wherever there was water, there were Black-headed Gulls.

Finally, in Prague, we had an afternoon to walk the historic district. eBird reports showed that there were some Little Grebes, our second lifer, near the Charles Bridge on the Vitava River. Sure enough, we found them easily. There was also a large flock of Tufted Ducks there and the rarest bird of the trip, a female Long-tailed Duck. Living near the Potomac and the Chesapeake in St. Mary's County, these are easily found in the winter but was quite unusual here.

Unfortunately, we were never able to venture out farther away from the city centers to larger expanses of green space. Surely the bird diversity there would have been higher. At this point, any woodpecker in Europe would be a lifer. That would have made our day. Another trip, perhaps! *Tyler Bell*

TALBOT COUNTY

South Africa Birding Adventure; Flock to Marion

The *Flock to Marion* voyage, organized by Birdlife South Africa, promised to be a reasonably-priced and comfortable way to visit some of the most remote seabird nesting islands of the southern oceans. Although we weren't sure what it would be like doing a pelagic bird trip on a 980-foot cruise ship with over a thousand other birders, we found the chance to visit the famed Prince Edward Islands – home to millions of nesting seabirds including many species of albatross, shearwater, petrel, and prion – too hard to resist. And,since we were traveling all the way to South Africa, it only made sense to add some land birding on either side of the cruise.

After two months of planning and wondering if the trip would be cancelled due to Covid, we were finally on our way. A week prior to our cruise, we joined four other birders, along with a guide and driver, for Rockjumper's West Cape Excursion.

We traveled about 900 miles through coastal areas, the Fynbos (one of the most bio-diverse regions in the world), and the arid, semi-desert Karoo scrubland.

At the end of that first week, we tallied 203 species,of which 182 were life birds. Thirty-five of these species were endemic to South Africa. While it's hard to pick favorites, highlights include the hundreds of African Penguins at the Betty's Bay Breeding Colony and various species of sunbirds sipping nectar, with their colorful plumage and long bills reminding us of New World hummingbirds.

Returning to Cape Town, we boarded the ship to start the pelagic adventure. We were sailing over 1200 miles Southeast of Cape Town toward 2 small islands- Prince Edward Island and Marion Island which sit halfway between South Africa and Antarctica. While still within sight of Cape Town we spotted a Cape Gannet, White-chinned Petrel and Cory's and Sooty Shearwater. As we continued to sail south, pelagic species increased and included Brown Skua, 4 species of Albatross - Yellow-nosed Indian, White-capped, Black-browed, and Wandering Albatross, both Northern and Southern Giant Petrels, and Great-winged and Soft-plumaged Petrels.

As we drew closer to the Prince Edward Islands, the number and diversity of species increased – with fifteen species on day three and nineteen on day four – including five species of albatross (adding Gray-headed, Sooty, and Light-mantled as new species for the trip).Scanning the water, we observed rafts of hundreds of Prions, mostly Salvin's, but with the help of our guides we were able to pick out a couple of Fairy Prion. We also had some fleeting looks at both King and Macaroni Penguins bobbing in the waves.

Unfortunately, an approaching storm caused us to cut our time near the Islands short by a couple of hours.As we headed back north, destination Durban, we spent most of the next day inside the ship due to rain and wind, reviewing bird lists and photographs. On day six, a rare Tristan Albatross was spotted following the ship.

Two days later, we docked in Durban, with our tally of 36 pelagic species (counting the Tristan), including eight species of Albatross and many other species that can only be found in the far reaches of the Southern Hemisphere oceans. And we still had some birding to do. After a 2.5 hour drive, we arrived at our cottage in St. Lucia. The habitat couldn't have been more different – lush forests, wetlands, and open savannahs.

Within minutes of checking in, we were greeted in the courtyard by a Crowned Hornbill, a Black-backed Puffbird, a White-eared Barbet, and a Red-fronted Tinkerbird. We spent the rest of the afternoon on our own, exploring the wooded trail that started at our cottage and snaked toward some wetlands, picking up 24 new species.The two days we spent in St. Lucia were well worth it, observing 99 species of which 67 were both new for our South Africa trip and lifers. Highlights included African Green Dove, both Purple-crested and Livingston's Turaco, a large flock of Collared Pratincole, and a nesting pair of Hammerkop.

The next morning, we added a couple of hours of early morning birding before returning to Durban for a quick flight to Johannesburg, followed by a trans-Atlantic flight back to the states. A great trip with over 300 bird species, 276 life birds, and hopes of a return trip. *Ron Ketter and Matt Whitbeck*

Crowned Hornbill, Photo by Ron Ketter

New Viewing Deck for Pickering's Wetland Walk

Pickering Creek's New Eleven Eagles Viewing Platform overlooks an eleven-acre wetland that is part of the Center's wetland complex. The creation of the platform was made possible by the **Talbot Bird Club** of the Maryland Ornithological Society. The Bird Club's gift was thanks to several gifts to the club,including a gift from the estate of Chandler Robbins. Talbot Bird Club members regularly visit the Center. The Bird Club and Pickering Creek both believe in encouraging people to connect to the outdoors through birdwatching. During construction, eleven eagles glided past in a single afternoon, leading to its naming.

Pickering Creek Audubon Staff and Volunteers and TCBC officers on Eleven Eagles Viewing Platform,, from left to right: Julien Larkin, Pickering Volunteer, Mark Scallion PC Director,Linda Yungbluth, Vice President, Talbot County Bird Club (TBC); Bettye Maki, President TCBC; Wayne Bell, Secretary TCBC., Tom Sanders, President of Pickering Board of Trustees,Mary Helen Gillen, Director of Education for Pickering Creek Audubon Center.

Photo by Susanna Scallion

The platform improves views of one of the wetland cells, previously often obscured by cattails or sweetgum. Good for hiding birds, not great for seeing them! The added elevation of the small platform provides the opportunity to set up a tripod for scope viewing, as well as that extra bit of height needed to see the wetland in its entirety. This wetland often features Black Ducks, Mallard, teal and other ducks in the winter and Snowy Egrets and other herons the rest of the year. The short walk from the wetland trail to the platform has beautiful blooming ironweed, tickseed sunflower, goldenrod in late summer and early fall. *Mark Scallion*

Pickering Creek Audubon Center is open daily in the spring from 7:00AM-6:00PM. Trails around the wetland complex can have standing water in winter and spring; waterproof boots are recommended. For the latest visit https://pickeringcreek.org/visit/planning-a-visit/

The Talbot Bird Club offers walks throughout the area most weekends of the year. To see their latest schedule visit https://mdbirds.org/join/chapters/talbot-bird-club

TRI-COUNTY

Tri-County member Deshirl Rankins joined the Talbot Bird Club on their birding trip to Oxford on Feb. 26. Deshirl had never been to Oxford before and was able to combine the trip, which was led by Jeff Effinger, with her interest in Maryland Black History. She visited the Water's Edge Museum and was thrilled to see hundred-year-old drawings and paintings of local black residents. (For more information on this interesting museum, check out their web site at https://www.watersedgemuseum.org/). As a relatively new birder, Deshirl enjoyed birding along the Oxford waterfront and was especially thrilled by an active Bald Eagle's nest at Bachelor's Point. Most exciting of all, one of the photos she took of an eagle in flight was featured on WBOC's *Outdoors Delmarva* program on March 11. It was an honor for Deshirl and also a nice shout-out for the Talbot Club and the town of Oxford, as both were mentioned in the spot. *Ellen Lawler*

Bald Eagle, Photo by Deshiri Rankins

Birds of the Southern Oceans

Tristan (Wandering) Albatross, Photo by Ron Ketter

Cape Petrels (Pintados), Photo by Carol Swan

African Penguins, Photo by Ron Ketter

Rockhopper Penguin, Photo by Carol Swan

Parade of Penguins seen by Gerald Winegrad and Carol Swan on their Antarctic Adventure Parade, put together by Carol Swan

From left to right: Rockhopper Penguin, Magellanic Penguin, Adelie Penguin, Macaroni Penguin, Chinstrap Penguin, Gentoo Penguin, King Penguin, Emperor Penguin

POSTMASTER: TIME -DATED MATERIAL - PLEASE EXPEDITE

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King Penguins with Elephant Seals, St. Andrew's Bay,
South Georgia Island

Photo by Carol Swan

MOS Calendar

Through 08/31/2023

Field Trips

Please follow all restrictions requested by the host organization. Additional details are posted on MOS and chapter web sites.

5/2	7 AM – 2 PM	Walk at Susquehanna State Park	Host: Anne Arundel Bird Club Contact Alan Young, alanmyoung@gmail.com or 410-991-8300 Leader Kevin Graff, keyweststyle2001@gmail.com or 410-967-5896 (text only)
5/2	8 – 11:30 AM	Lake Roland	Host: Baltimore Bird Club Leader: Ron Davis, ronldavis1963@gmail.com. Description: Continuing series of weekly walks following the progress of spring migration in Lake Roland's varied habitats. Meet at the Light Rail Parking Lot (Boardwalk entrance to the park).
5/3	9 – 11:30 AM	Fort McHenry	Host: Baltimore Bird Club Leader: Mary Chetelat, 443-564-6551. Description: Continuing survey of bird activity at the Fort. Contact leader 24 hours in advance for updates.
5/4	6 – 8 PM	Semi-Monthly afternoon walk at Lake Artemesia	Host: Patuxent Bird Club & PGAS. Two-mile walk around lake on paved path; wheelchair-accessible. Families welcome.
5/4	8 – 10:30 AM	Orioles at Cromwell Valley Park	Host: Baltimore Bird Club Leader: Mark Linardi, mlinardi@outlook.com or 443-834-8413. Description: Cromwell in early May is an excellent place to see/hear Baltimore and Orchard Orioles. Meet at the Willow Grove parking lot.
5/5	7 – 9 AM	Birding by Ear at Hughes Hollow	Host: Montgomery Bird Club Leader Paul Woodward at grackling@ATT.NET. Description: Tune up your ears as we listen for and learn to identify the songs and calls of migrant and local breeding birds. The trip will be geared to new birders but all are welcome. Limit: 8.
5/6	7 – 10 AM	Warbler Walk at Rock Run	Host: Harford Bird Club Leader: Tim Houghton (410-510-7504; timhoughton@comcast.net). Description: Take a stroll through the park in search of spring migrants and other songbirds, as well as waterfowl and waders out on the river.
5/6	7 AM – 12 PM	Western Washington County	Host: Washington County Bird Club Text Mark Abdy, 301-573-1301 or email mjabdy@yahoo.com. Description: Bird walk with Mark Abdy and Heather McSharry.
5/6	7:30 – 10 AM	Monthly walk at Fran Uhler Natural Area	Host: Patuxent Bird Club & PGAS. Leader Bill Sefton (kiwisuits@msn.com). Description: Two-mile out-and-back walk at natural area on the Patuxent River; fields, wet woods, brushy areas.
5/6	7:30 AM – 4 PM	Delaware Coast for Migrating Shorebirds	Host: Tri-county Bird Club Leader Ellen Lawler at 410-982-8695 or emlawler534@comcast.net Description: Birding at a number of sites along the Delaware Coast to observe migrating shorebirds. Meet at Ward Museum parking lot at 7:30 a.m.
5/6	8 – 11 AM	Druid Hill Park	Host: Baltimore Bird Club Leader: Toby Pessoa Gingerich, tags2011@gmail.com Description: Druid Hill Park offers a good mix of warblers and other passerines, as well as resident (including nesting) raptors. Meet at the Swann Dr. entrance. RSVP required.
5/6	8 AM – 12 PM	Bear Branch Nature Center	Host: Carroll County Bird Club Leaders Carole Hood and Jeff Marx (jmarx@mcdaniel.edu) Description: We will be looking for vireos, Blue-gray Gnatcatchers and flycatchers.
5/6	8 AM – 12 PM	Fair Hill NWMA	Host: Cecil Bird Club Leader Ken Drier (kdrier@zoominternet.net). Description: Grassland habitat for ground-nesting birds. Meet at North Appleton parking lot #3,
5/7	7 – 10 AM	Patterson Park	Host: Baltimore Bird Club Leader: Bud Poole, budpoole343@gmail.com. Description: Meet at the southern end of the boat lake. Expect to find a variety of migrant and resident birds. Beginning birders welcome. Please RSVP to the leader.

5/7	7 AM – 12 PM	Duvall Farm	Host: Talbot County Bird Club Leader: Ron Ketter (707-373-5532 or rgketter@gmail.com). Description: Migrants, forest and field birds. Depart from Easton Acme parking lot at 7:00 am
5/7	7:30 – 10 AM	Monthly Walk at Kinder Farm Park	Host: Anne Arundel Bird Club Contact Alan Young, alanmyoung@gmail.com or 410-991-8300
5/7	8 – 11 AM	Western Regional Park	Host: Howard Bird Club Leader: David Sandler, detour65@gmail.com Description: Opportunity for warblers, sparrows, thrushes, and flyovers. Meet at Carr's Mill Road parking lot,
5/7	8 AM – 12 PM	Birding by Canoe at Days Cove	Host: Baltimore Bird Club Leader: Sam Tillman, sam.tillman@gmail.com, 443-844-5917. Description: Explore Days Cove from a canoe! Opportunities to see Marsh Wrens, Least Bitterns, Rails, and other wetland specialties. Participants must be at least 12 years old. Limit 20. RSVP to leader required.
5/7	TBD	Gambrill SP, Watershed, and Sand Flats	Host: Frederick Bird Club Leader Lois Kauffman (301-845-6690 or md.pa.birding@gmail.com) Description: Warblers and spring arrivals. Contact leader for meeting time and location
5/9	8 – 11:30 AM	Lake Roland	Host: Baltimore Bird Club Leader: Mark Linardi, mlinardi@outlook.com or 443-834-8413. Description: Continuing series of weekly walks following the progress of spring migration in Lake Roland's varied habitats. Meet at the Light Rail Parking Lot (Boardwalk entrance to the park).
5/12	8 AM – 12 PM	Mill Run Camp Ground	Host: Allegany/Garrett Bird Club, Contact westernmdbirdclub@gmail.com for questions or to register. Bill Blauvelt is the point person. Description: Meet at the parking area near the end of Mill Run Road.
5/13	7 – 10 AM	Rickman/Woodstock Equestrian Park	Host: Montgomery Bird Club Leader Scott Young, scott4aves@icloud.com. Dave Roberts will co-lead. Description: Spring birding, hoping for warblers and sparrows, vireos, woodpeckers, and raptors. Limit: 10.
5/13	7:30 – 10:30 AM	Harford Glen	Host: Harford Bird Club Leader: Lynn Feryus (443-910-5570 or lfery@verizon.net) Description: Riparian habitat, woodland trails and the open meadows offer great opportunities for good birding.
5/13	All day	World Series of Birding	Host: YMOS Contact: George Radcliffe (radclifg@gmail.com, 410-463-1669) Description: Student Competition
5/14	7:30 AM – 12 PM	Occoquan Bay NWR	Host: Montgomery Bird Club Leaders Mike Bowen, 202-236-0510, dhmbowen@yahoo.com and Gerry Hawkins, 571-277-8406, maineusa@comcast.net. Description:Raptors and migratory warblers, vireos, thrushes, and flycatchers; rails and bitterns are possibilities. Limit: 20.
5/14	8:15 – 11 AM	Cylburn Arboretum	Host: Baltimore Bird Club Leader: Mark Linardi, mlinardi@outlook.com or 443-834-8413. Description: Easy birding in Cylburn's gardens and urban forest. Beginning birders welcome. Limit 10. Pre-registration required- RSVP to the leader.
5/14	9 – 11 AM	Marshy Point Nature Center	Host: Baltimore Bird Club Leaders: Brent and Mary Byers, baypuffin@hotmail.com or 410-686-7294. Description: Easy half-day walk through varied habitats for feeder birds and other songbirds, raptors, and waterfowl. All are welcome, including families.
5/14	TBD	YOUTH BIRDING, Dupont Nature Center, Delaware	Host: Baltimore Bird Club Leader: Daisy Sudano, dsudanotrainings@yahoo.com. Description: Join us to see the thousands of horseshoe crabs that spawn here. Contact the leader to confirm time for this event.
5/14 – 17	All day	Magee Marsh Wildlife Area	Host: Frederick Bird Club Leaders: Bonnie Borsa (301-606-9383 or bonborsa@comcast.net) and Kathy Brown (301-865-1369 or kathybrown07@verizon.net) Description: Multiday trip for spring migrants.
5/15	All day	Susquehanna State Park	Host: Talbot County Bird Club Leaders: Dave Burgevin (301-788-0916 or dburgevin@gmail.com) and Bettye Maki (248-225-0724 or bjmaki04@gmail.com) Description: Migrants, Cerulean Warblers. Depart from Easton Acme parking lot at 7:00 am or meet at Susquehanna State Park, Rock Run Mill parking area.
5/16	8 – 11 AM	Walk at North Point State Park	Host: Anne Arundel Bird Club Contact Alan Young, alanmyoung@gmail.com or 410-991-8300 Leader Kevin Graff, keyweststyle2001@gmail.com or 410-967-5896 (text only)

5/16	8 – 11:30 AM	Lake Roland	Host: Baltimore Bird Club Leader: Mary Chetelat, 443-564-6551 or mechetelat@icloud.com. Description: Continuing series of weekly walks following the progress of spring migration in Lake Roland's varied habitats. Meet at the Light Rail Parking Lot (Boardwalk entrance to the park).
5/16	8 AM – 4 PM	Howard County Conservancy: Skywatch	Host: Howard County Bird Club Description: This is an unofficial Big Sit. We will look for flyovers and look and listen to surrounding birds. No need to sign up, just show up. Canceled in case of heavy rain.
5/18	6 – 8 PM	Semi-Monthly afternoon walk at Lake Artemesia	Host: Patuxent Bird Club & PGAS. Description: Two-mile walk around lake on paved path; wheelchair-accessible. Families welcome.
5/19 – 21	All day	MOS Conference	Convention theme is "The Next 75" - a launching point for a short retrospective of our history, and a look forward to the future direction of MOS. https://www.mosconvention.org/
5/20	7:30 – 10 AM	Monthly walk at Governor Bridge Natural Area	Host: Patuxent Bird Club & PGAS. Leader Bill Sefton (kiwisuits@msn.com). Description: Two-mile loop at natural area on the Patuxent River; fields, wet woods, brushy areas, wetlands, ponds.
5/20	7:30 – 10:30 AM	Eden Mill	Host: Harford Bird Club Contact leader Matthew Addicks (maddicks@harfordcountymd.gov) for questions. Description: Walk the trails along Deer Creek. Expect to see warblers, breeders, and some of the raptors that breed in the surrounding area.
5/20	8 – 11 AM	Piney Orchard Nature Preserve.	Host: Baltimore Bird Club Leaders: Deb and Lou Taylor, debrataylor11@gmail.com or 410-852-9807 Description: Woods, meadows, and ponds can bring in Orchard Oriole, Blue Grosbeak, and Prothonotary Warbler.
5/20	8 – 9:30 AM	Druid Hill Park	Host: Baltimore Bird Club Description: Join Audubon and the Maryland Zoo to explore this leafy city park. From forest to lake, a variety of bird species await. Must register in advance at https://patterson.audubon.org.
5/20	8 AM – 12 PM	Krimgold Park	Host: Carroll County Bird Club For more details or to RSVP contact Matthew Hodgdon, mhodgdon@msn.com Description: We hop to see sparrows, swallows and Horned Larks. Meet at the last parking lot by the pavilion.
5/20	9 – 11:30 AM	Fort McHenry	Host: Baltimore Bird Club Leader: Wendy Alexander, 443-204-3754. Description: Continuing survey of bird activity at the Fort. Binoculars required. A telescope can be useful for distance viewing. Contact leader 24 hours in advance for updates.
5/20	TBD	Breeding Bird Atlasing	Host: Talbot County Bird Club Description: We'll select blocks in Talbot County that are lagging in the number of species coded and arrange a special trip. Great opportunity for those new to atlasing to get some good field experience
5/21	8 – 10 AM	Monthly Walk at Quiet Waters Park	Host: Anne Arundel Bird Club Contact Jim Collatz , jcollatz@aol.com or 301-254-0188
5/23	7 AM – 12 PM	Blue Mash and Oaks Landfill	Host: Montgomery Bird Club Leader Mark England, englandmark@comcast.net or 240-308-4114. Songbirds and other species on the Blue Mash Nature Trail, and raptors, blue grosbeaks, possibly dickcissels and grasshopper sparrows at Oaks Landfill. Limit 10.
5/23	8 – 11:30 AM	Lake Roland	Host: Baltimore Bird Club Leader: Matthew Black, matthewblack66@icloud.com. Description: Continuing series of weekly walks following the progress of spring migration in Lake Roland's varied habitats. Meet at the Light Rail Parking Lot (Boardwalk entrance to the park).
5/24	7 AM – 5 PM	All day trip to Delaware	Host: Anne Arundel Bird Club Contact Alan Young alanmyoung@gmail.com or 410-991-8300 Leader TBA. Meet at Bay 50.
5/26	8 – 11 AM	Walk at Jug Bay Wetlands Sanctuary	Host: Anne Arundel Bird Club Contact Alan Young alanmyoung@gmail.com or 410-991-8300 Leader TBA
5/27	7:30 AM – 12 PM	Patapsco Scrubland	Host: Howard County Bird Club Leader Felicia Lovelett, c5nest@gmail.com. Description: Starting in the scrubland, we'll look for warblers, vireos, thrushes, and other edge species. Depending on conditions, we may continue into the woods.
5/27	8 – 11 AM	Herring Run Park	Host: Baltimore Bird Club Leader: Kim Tomko, ktomkat@gmail.com or 443-414-8034. Description: This urban park in Northeast Baltimore is an oasis for many migrating and resident bird species. RSVP required.

5/27	8 – 9:30 AM	Patterson Park	Host: Baltimore Bird Club Description: Join Audubon to explore this urban oasis in southeast Baltimore. Must register in advance at https://patterson.audubon.org.
5/27	TBD	Hughes Hollow/McKee-Beshers WMA	Host: Frederick Bird Club Leader: Lynn Kieffer (301-943-5290 or lynnkieffer@yahoo.com) Description: Breeding birds. Contact leader for meeting time and location.
5/28	7:30 AM – 12 PM	Patapsco Scrubland	Host: Howard County Bird Club Leader Felicia Lovelett, c5nest@gmail.com Description: We'll look for warblers, vireos, thrushes, and other edge species, possibly continuing into the woods. Meet at 735 River Road.
5/28	TBD	Breeding Bird Atlasing	Host: Talbot County Bird Club Description: We'll select blocks in Talbot County that are lagging in the number of species coded and arrange a special trip. This is a great opportunity for those new to atlasing to get some good field experience
5/29	7 – 11 AM	Hidden Valley and surrounding areas	Host: Harford Bird Club Leader: Dennis Kirkwood (410-692-5905 or newarkfarms@gmail.com). Description: From Hidden Valley to Bradenbaugh Flats, with stops along the way. Meet in the parking lot at the N end of Madonna Rd where it crosses Deer Creek.
5/30	8 – 11:30 AM	Lake Roland	Host: Baltimore Bird Club Leader: Laura Lechtzin, lechtzin@verizon.net. Description: Continuing series of weekly walks following the progress of spring migration in Lake Roland's varied habitats. Meet at the Light Rail Parking Lot (Boardwalk entrance to the park).
6/1	6 – 8 PM	Semi-Monthly afternoon walk at Lake Artemesia	Host: Patuxent Bird Club & PGAS. Description: Two-mile walk around lake on paved path; wheelchair-accessible. Families welcome.
6/3	6:30 AM – 12 PM	Fair Hill	Host: Harford Bird Club Leader Dave Webb (410-939-3537; porzana@comcast.net) Description: Breeding species, including Bobolink, Eastern Meadowlark, Veery, Scarlet Tanager. Parking fee. Meet at Parking lot #3.
6/3	7:30 – 10 AM	Monthly walk at Fran Uhler Natural Area	Host: Patuxent Bird Club & PGAS. Leader Bill Sefton (kiwisuits@msn.com). Description: Two-mile out-and-back walk at natural area on the Patuxent River; fields, wet woods, brushy areas.
6/3	7:30 – 10 AM	Patuxent River at Brown's Bridge	Host: Montgomery Bird Club Leader Cheryl Hogue at cheryl.hogue@gmail.com. Description: Look for Cliff Swallows at the bridge and other breeding birds including Scarlet Tanager, flycatchers, and thrushes.
6/3	8 AM – 12 PM	Birding C&O Canal	Host: Allegany/Garrett Bird Club. Bill Blauvelt is point person. Register at westernmdbirdclub@gmail.com Description: Hike targets a BBA3 block to increase data on breeding bird activity. Meet at the Oldtown parking lot for the canal.
6/3	8 AM – 12 PM	Bohemia River SP	Host: Cecil Bird Club Leader Ken Drier (kdrier@zoominternet.net). Description: New park along the Bohemia River. Half-mile walk from parking lot to trailhead.
6/3	8 AM – 3 PM	Grasslands Trip	Host: Carroll County Bird Club Contact John White, jwgroovin@yahoo.com Description: Explore NW Carroll County by car for sparrows, Horned Larks, Dickcissels and Meadowlarks. Meet at Mount Airy P&R at 8 am.
6/4	8 AM – 12 PM	Susquehanna State Park	Host: Baltimore Bird Club Leader Toby Pessoa Gingerich, tags2011@gmail.com Description: Peak migration may be past, but many warblers stick around to breed. Here. Meet at the old Mill House.
6/7	9 AM – 11 AM	Fort McHenry	Host: Baltimore Bird Club Leader: Mary Chatelat, 443-564-6552. Description: Continuing survey of bird activity at the Fort. Binoculars required. A telescope can be useful for distance viewing. Contact leader 24 hours in advance for updates.
6/10	TBD	Atlas Block Buster	Host: Harford Bird Club Contact Dennis Kirkwood, 410-692-5905 or newarkfarms@gmail.com or Matt Hafner, 410-971-3202 or hafner.matt@gmail.com. Description: Help determine breeding bird populations. Details TBA, check web site.
6/11	9 – 11 AM	Marshy Point Nature Center	Host: Baltimore Bird Club Leaders: Brent and Mary Byers, baypuffin@hotmail.com or 410-686-7294. Description: Easy half-day walk through varied habitats for feeder birds and other songbirds, raptors, and waterfowl. All are welcome, including families.

6/14	8 – 11 AM	Birds of the Woodlands for Beginners	Host: Howard County Bird Club Leader Bonnie Ott, sparrowdamsel@gmail.com Description: Easy walking on trails and paths to learn woodland birds. Use of binoculars and identification resources will be covered. Limit 10. Reservations required.
6/15	6 – 8 PM	Semi-Monthly afternoon walk at Lake Artemesia	Host: Patuxent Bird Club & PGAS. Description: Two-mile walk around lake on paved path; wheelchair-accessible. Families welcome.
6/17	7:30 – 10 AM	Monthly walk at Governor Bridge Natural Area	Host: Patuxent Bird Club & PGAS. Leader Bill Sefton (kiwisuits@msn.com). Description: Two-mile loop at natural area on the Patuxent River; fields, wet woods, brushy areas, wetlands, ponds.
6/17	8 AM – 12 PM	Birding 15 Mile Creek	Host: Allegany/Garrett Bird Club. Melissa Hensel is point person. Register at westernmdbirdclub@gmail.com Description: Hike targets a BBA3 block to increase data on breeding bird activity. Meet at the entrance to 15 Mile Creek Rd.
6/17	TBD	Atlasing Big Day	Host: Baltimore Bird Club Contact coordinator Paul Kreiss, 410-367-8194 or paul1kreiss@verizon.net for assignment. Description: Document breeding bird activity in under-surveyed atlas blocks.
6/17	8 – 9:30 AM	Druid Hill Park	Host: Baltimore Bird Club Description: Join Audubon and the Maryland Zoo to explore this leafy city park. From forest to lake, a variety of bird species await. Must register in advance at https://patterson.audubon.org.
6/17	8 AM – 12 PM	Perryville Paddle	Host: Harford Bird Club Leaders Colleen Webster (410-459-4577; cwebster@harford.edu) or Sue Procell (443-417-4919; procellmd@gmail.com). Description: Bring your kayak, canoe or stand-up to ply Mill Creek and Furnace Bay. Meet at Stump Point launch.
6/18	TBD	FAMILY BIRDING, Patterson Park	Host: Baltimore Bird Club Contact leader Daisy Sudano, dsudanotrainings@yahoo.com for time. Description: Fun walk followed by collage waterfowl painting. Meet by the SE side of the boat lake.
6/20	10:30 AM – 12:30 PM	Butterfly Walk at Mt. Pleasant	Free registration at Howard County Conservancy. (https://www.howardnature.org/events/list/)
6/24	8 – 9:30 AM	Patterson Park	Host: Baltimore Bird Club Description: Join Audubon to explore this urban oasis in southeast Baltimore. Participants must register in advance at https://patterson.audubon.org.
6/24	8:30 – 10:30 AM	Bird Walks at Sang Run	Host: Allegany/Garrett Bird Club Description: Walks are led by Sang Run SP rangers. Meet near the Friends Delight Store.
6/26	10:30 AM – 12:30 PM	Butterfly Walk at Mt. Pleasant	Free registration at Howard County Conservancy. (https://www.howardnature.org/events/list/)
6/28	8 – 11 AM	Birds of Second Growth for Beginners at Rockburn Branch Park	Host: Howard County Bird Club Leader Bonnie Ott, sparrowdamsel@gmail.com Description: Easy walking on trails and paths to learn second-growth birds. Use of binoculars and identification resources will be covered. Limit 10. Reservations required.
7/1	7:30 – 10 AM	Monthly walk at Fran Uhler Natural Area	Host: Patuxent Bird Club & PGAS. Leader Bill Sefton (kiwisuits@msn.com). Description: Two-mile out-and-back walk at natural area on the Patuxent River; fields, wet woods, brushy areas.
7/1	8:30 – 10:30 AM	Bird Walks at Sang Run	Host: Allegany/Garrett Bird Club Description: Walks are led by Sang Run SP rangers. Meet near the Friends Delight Store.
7/6	6 – 8 PM	Semi-Monthly afternoon walk at Lake Artemesia	Host: Patuxent Bird Club & PGAS. Description: Two-mile walk around lake on paved path; wheelchair-accessible. Families welcome.
7/7	7 – 10 AM	Bird Walk at Serenity Trail, ACM	Host: Allegany/Garrett Bird Club. Melissa Hensel is point person. Register at westernmdbirdclub@gmail.com. Description: Hike targets a BBA3 block to increase data on breeding bird activity. Meet behind the Continuing Education Building.

7/8	8 – 11 AM	Habitat Walk: Druid Hill Park	Host: Baltimore Bird Club Leaders Megan Carr and Tobias Pessoa Gingerich, RSVP to tags@gmail.com. Description: Forested natural areas, water resources and uncommon non-native plants. Meet on Red Rd. in front of TreeBaltimore Nursery.
7/8	8:30 – 10:30 AM	Bird Walks at Sang Run	Host: Allegany/Garrett Bird Club Description: Walks are led by Sang Run SP rangers. Meet near the Friends Delight Store.
7/9	9 – 11 AM	Marshy Point Nature Center	Host: Baltimore Bird Club Leaders: Brent and Mary Byers, baypuffin@hotmail.com or 410-686-7294. Description: Easy half-day walk through varied habitats for feeder birds and other songbirds, raptors, and waterfowl. All are welcome, including families.
7/9	9 AM – 12 PM	Bird Walk at the Kijeck Campground	Host: Allegany/Garrett Bird Club. Bill Blauvelt is point person. Register at westernmdbirdclub@gmail.com Description: Hike targets a BBA3 block to increase data on breeding bird activity.
7/15	7:30 – 10 AM	Monthly walk at Governor Bridge Natural Area	Host: Patuxent Bird Club & PGAS. Leader Bill Sefton (kiwisuits@msn.com). Description: Two-mile loop at natural area on the Patuxent River; fields, wet woods, brushy areas, wetlands, ponds.
7/15	8:30 – 10:30 AM	Bird Walks at Sang Run	Host: Allegany/Garrett Bird Club Description: Walks are led by Sang Run SP rangers. Meet near the Friends Delight Store.
7/20	6 – 8 PM	Semi-Monthly afternoon walk at Lake Artemesia	Host: Patuxent Bird Club & PGAS. Description: Two-mile walk around lake on paved path; wheelchair-accessible. Families welcome.
7/22	8 – 9:30 AM	Druid Hill Park	Host: Baltimore Bird Club Description: Join Audubon and the Maryland Zoo to explore this leafy city park. From forest to lake, a variety of bird species await. Must register in advance at https://patterson.audubon.org.
7/22	8:30 – 10:30 AM	Bird Walks at Sang Run	Host: Allegany/Garrett Bird Club Description: Walks are led by Sang Run SP rangers. Meet near the Friends Delight Store.
7/29	8 – 9:30 AM	Patterson Park	Host: Baltimore Bird Club Description: Join Audubon to explore this urban oasis in southeast Baltimore. Must register in advance at https://patterson.audubon.org.
7/29	8:30 – 10:30 AM	Bird Walks at Sang Run	Host: Allegany/Garrett Bird Club Description: Walks are led by Sang Run SP rangers. Meet near the Friends Delight Store.
8/3	6 – 8 PM	Semi-Monthly afternoon walk at Lake Artemesia	Host: Patuxent Bird Club & PGAS. Description: Two-mile walk around lake on paved path; wheelchair-accessible. Families welcome.
8/5	7:30 – 10 AM	Monthly walk at Fran Uhler Natural Area	Host: Patuxent Bird Club & PGAS. Leader Bill Sefton (kiwisuits@msn.com). Description: Two-mile out-and-back walk at natural area on the Patuxent River; fields, wet woods, brushy areas.
8/10	10 – 11 AM	Smithsonian Museum of Natural History tour	Host: Balitmore Bird Club Register with Sarah Luttrell, luttrell.sa@gmail.com or text 614-352-7718. Description: Tour of the ornithological collection and Feather Identification Lab. Must register in advance. Limit 15.
8/13	9 – 11 AM	Marshy Point Nature Center	Host: Baltimore Bird Club Leaders: Brent and Mary Byers, baypuffin@hotmail.com or 410-686-7294. Description: Easy half-day walk through varied habitats for feeder birds and other songbirds, raptors, and waterfowl. All are welcome, including families.
8/17	6 – 8 PM	Semi-monthly walk at Lake Artemesia	Host: Patuxent Bird Club & PGAS. Description: Two-mile walk around lake on paved path; wheelchair-accessible. Families welcome.
8/19	7:30 – 10 AM	Monthly walk at Governor Bridge Natural Area	Host: Patuxent Bird Club & PGAS. Leader Bill Sefton (kiwisuits@msn.com). Description: Two-mile loop at natural area on the Patuxent River; fields, wet woods, brushy areas, wetlands, ponds.
8/19	8 – 9:30 AM	Druid Hill Park	Host: Baltimore Bird Club Description: Join Audubon and the Maryland Zoo to explore this leafy city park. From forest to lake, a variety of bird species await. Must register in advance at https://patterson.audubon.org.
8/19	7:30 – 11 AM	Loch Raven – Paper Mill and Ashland Flats	Host: Baltimore Bird Club Leader Sam Tillman 443-844-5917 or sam.tillman@gmail.com Description: Ashland Flats for shorebirds, then Paper Mill Flats for waterfowl and early migrants. Limit 15. RSVP required.

8/20	TBD	FAMILY BIRDING: Fairwood Forest	Host: Baltimore Bird Club Contact leader Daisy Sudano, dsudanotrainings@yahoo.com for time. Description: See some bird-friendly backyards and make a simple bird feeder.
8/26	8 – 9:30 AM	Patterson Park	Host: Baltimore Bird Club Description: Join Audubon to explore this urban oasis in southeast Baltimore. Must register in advance at https://patterson.audubon.org.

Meetings

Meetings may be virtual or in-person (or both)! Additional details, including links, will be posted on chapter web sites and the MOS calendar, as available.

5/3	7 – 9 PM	Baltimore Bird Club	Gail Mackiernan will speak on a 2019 trip to Panama.	Virtual
5/5	7 – 9 PM	Frederick Bird Club	Erin Hewitt Ragheb will speak on her research with Florida Grasshopper Sparrows.	Virtual
5/6	6:30 – 9 PM	Harford Bird Club	MOTHerhood: An Introductory Guide for Birders, by Dave Webb. Free pizza and dessert. RSVP by May 4.	Churchville Presbyterian Church
5/10	7 – 9 PM	BBC Board Meeting	While only authorized board members have a vote, any club member is welcome to attend and participate in discussions.	Virtual
5/10	7 – 9 PM	Kent County Bird Club	Speaker & program to be announced	Heron Point
5/10	7 – 9 PM	Patuxent Bird Club & PGAS	Paul Baicich speaking on Access Matters: Why Birders Should Care about access to lands for birding.	Virtual
5/11	7:30 – 9:30 PM	Montgomery Bird Club	Social at Woodend, to honor the Member of the Year, enjoy members' presentation of their most beloved recent photographs, and have a delicious dinner.	Woodend
5/12	7:30 – 9 PM	Howard County Bird Club	Kojo Baidoo will present "Birding During a Semester Abroad in Panama"	Robinson Nature Center and virtual
5/18	7 – 9 PM	Anne Arundel Bird Club	Speaker and program TBA	Virtual
5/19	7:30 – 9 PM	Caroline Bird Club	Andi Pupke, Education/Outreach Director of Chesapeake Wildlife Heritage will discuss their nesting box program and recommendations of some native plants for pollinators and pollinator gardens.	Caroline County Public Library
5/20-22	All Day	MOS	MOS Convention: see Convention web site https://www.mosconvention.org/	Wisp Resort, McHenry MD
5/23	6 – 9 PM	Tri-county Bird Club	"Can Floating Islands save endangered seabirds in Maryland's Coastal Bays?" presented by David Curson, Director of Bird Conservation, Audubon Mid-Atlantic.	MAC Education Center
5/24	7 – 9 PM	Washington County Bird Club	Member's Night	Mt. Aetna Nature Center
6/2	6 – 9 PM	Picnic: Frederick Bird Clu	Annual Picnic and Bird Walk	Pinecliff Park
6/3	10 AM – 12 PM	MOS	Board Meeting	Chesapeake College, Wye, MD and virtual

6/14	7 – 9 PM	BBC Board Meeting	While only authorized board members have a vote, any club member is welcome to attend and participate in discussions.	Virtual
6/14	7 – 9 PM	Patuxent Bird Club & PGAS	Annual Members' Night. Sign up ahead of time by sending an email to Ken Cohen (kvulture@aol.com).	Virtual
6/26	4 – 7 PM	Washington County Bird Club	Picnic. Please bring your own plates, silverware, drink, and a dish to share.	Fort Frederick State Park
7/15	6:15 – 9 PM	Harford Bird Club	Club Social: Enjoy cold beverages and a variety of delicious appetizers along with some stimulating conversation.	Anita C Leight Estuary Center
8/28	4 – 7 PM	Washington County Bird Club	Picnic. Please bring your own plates, silverware, drink, and a dish to share.	Camp Harding Park

Seasonal Counts		
5/06	Dorchester County May Count 1	Contact Harry Armistead (215-913-4785 or harryarmistead@hotmail.com)
5/06	Fred Archibald Sanctuary Count	Contact David Smith (443-995-4108 or lacsmith@comcast.net)
5/13	Allegany County Spring Bird Count	Contact Mark Eanes at mdeanes@atlanticbb.net
5/13	Anne Arundel County May Count	Contact Steve Sheffield, srsheffield@comcast.net
5/13	Baltimore County May Count	Contact Libby Errickson, elizabeth.errickson@gmail.com.
5/13	Calvert County May Count	Contact Sherman Suter, shermansuter@gmail.com
5/13	Caroline County May Count	Check Caroline Bird Club web site or Facebook page for more information
5/13	Carroll County May Count	Contact Scott Hodgdon, scotthodgdon@msn.com
5/13	Charles County May Count	Contact Lynne Wheeler, somdaudubon@yahoo.com
5/13	Dorchester County May Count 2	Contact Harry Armistead (215-913-4785 or harryarmistead@hotmail.com)
5/13	Frederick County May Count	Contact David Smith (443-995-4108 or lacsmith@comcast.net)
5/13	Garrett County May Count	Contact Duane Bailey at dbailey3@earthlink.net.
5/13	Howard County May Count	Contact Gregg Petersen, sig29@aol.com
5/13	Prince Georges County May Count	Contact Matt Felperin (mfelperin@nvrpa.org)
5/13	St. Mary's County May Count	Contact J. Tyler Bell, jtylerbell@yahoo.com
5/13	Washington County May Count	Text Mark Abdy at 301-573-1301 or email mjabdy@yahoo.com
5/13	Worcester County May Count	Contact Marcia Balestri, mebalestri@gmail.com
5/14	Somerset County May Count	Contact Pat Valdata, pvaldata@charter.net
5/13	Wicomico County May Count	Contact Ellen Lawler, emlawler534@comcast.net.
5/14	Audrey Carroll Sanctuary Count	Contact David Smith (443-995-4108 or lacsmith@comcast.net)
5/14	Talbot County May Count	Contact Ron Ketter (707-373-5532 or rgketter@gmail.com)